

# JOHN KNOX



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# Leaders of Religion

EDITED BY H. C. BEECHING, M.A.

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JOHN KNOX.

# J O H N   K N O X

BY

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# JOHN KNOX.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE FIRST FORTY YEARS.

PERHAPS the most singular fact in the life of Knox is the unbroken silence of the first forty years. He, who was the most explicit of men in all that related to himself, never referred to his early life except in some such short, uneasy allusion as "the time spent in the puddle of Papistry." Shame probably kept him silent. What we know from other sources is little enough. He was born probably near Haddington in the year 1505. Unlike most of his countrymen, of whom Erasmus remarks that they all claimed to be of noble birth, Knox was content to describe himself as "a man of base estate and condition." His name occurs in the student lists of Glasgow College for the year 1522, but is absent from the list of those who took their degree. The famous John Major was lecturing in Glasgow in those years; and it is possible that the strong democratic convictions and contempt for conventional authorities which Knox shared with Major's other pupil Buchanan, may have been instilled into

them as students in the class-room at Glasgow. Possibly also Knox's later habit of scornfully thrusting aside his adversaries' logic may have been formed while he listened, with impatience, to Major's endless scholastic subtleties. It is certain that Knox was in minor orders. His Catholic adversaries used to taunt him with having been one of the "Pope's Knights," and with having received orders "by which ye were umquhile called Sir John." The tradition followed by Beza describes him as a lecturer in subtlest dialectics at St. Andrews, and as later renouncing scholastic theology for the study of Jerome and Augustine. Of evidence for this tradition there is no trace in any written record. On the contrary, the only documentary evidence we have is the name of "Sir John Knox" appended to two or three notarial papers, which show that, between the years 1540 and 1543, Knox was deciding the value of chalders of victual and drawing up law papers in the neighbourhood of Haddington.

During these long years of obscurity, Knox may have been silently gathering evidence of those scandals and abuses in the Church which he relates with such relish in his *History*. Gross and grotesque as are the charges of profligacy which he brings against the prelates, they are borne out by the admissions made in all severe sobriety by one Provincial Assembly of the Church after the other. If Knox stigmatizes indolent and worldly bishops as "idle bellies" and "dumb dogs," the Catholic apologist, Quintin Kennedy, describes, with a satire as pungent though more delicate, the system by which benefices were filled. "And when they—*i. e.* grasping noblemen—have gotten a benefice, if they have a brother or son who can neither sing nor say, nourished in vice all

his days, he shall be immediately mounted on a mule, with a side-gown and a round bonnet, and then it is a question whether he or his mule know best to do his office." Among prelates elected in this manner, it was no wonder that some were like the Bishop of Dunkeld, who "thanked God that he knew neither the Old nor New Testament."

Living in a country parish, Knox must have seen with his own eyes the greed, ignorance and licentiousness of the smaller clergy. In Haddington, as in other parts of Scotland, priests made a trade of their office, turning once again the House of God into a den of thieves. "Teinds," a tax levied by the Church on all agricultural produce, weighed heavily on peasants already ground down by the feudal dues of the landowners. "They two (*i. e.* churchman and noble) live by me," says the peasant in the *Complaynt of Scotland*, "and I die by them." The tyranny of the Churchmen seems to have rankled most deeply—

"Our parson here, he takes no other pyne (pain),  
But to receive his teind and spend it syne,  
Though they should want preaching seventeen year,  
Our parson will not want one sheaf of bear" (barley).

Against the neglect and oppression of the Church, the poor had only the last ineffectual weapons of contempt and derision. The people ceased to attend the services, "they so lightlied the Mass" that priests complained that there was no longer a living to be made out of it. "Cursing" (excommunication)—once the awful severance of a sinful soul from the Church's charity and the mercy of God—became a jest and mockery to peasants as they sat drinking together at the tavern.

But the Church, though she was losing all hold on the people, was politically strong in the reign of James V (1513—1542). The pupil of Sir David Lindsay, and himself a man of shrewdness and experience, the King could not shut his eyes to flagrant abuses. But though he might at times threaten the Churchmen, he knew, and they knew, that he was entirely dependent on their support. From the time he had escaped from the hated tutelage of the Douglasses, he had tried systematically to abase the Nobility, and had filled all offices with Churchmen, who indeed, by their greater learning and knowledge of the world, were more fitted to discharge public duties than ignorant and violent noblemen. Of these ecclesiastical politicians, the ablest and most conspicuous was Cardinal Beaton. Under his influence James leaned more and more to a French alliance, and resisted the persuasions of his uncle, Henry VIII, to follow his example and at once reform the lives of the Churchmen, and fill his own coffers with their wealth. Foiled in his attempt to influence his nephew, Henry was secretly busy making allies of the discontented Scotch Nobility. Many of the more needy and unscrupulous of these were in his pay.

But there was another section of the Scottish people who also favoured a close alliance with England. After Henry's breach with Rome, this party looked to the English King for aid in carrying out religious reform in their own country. Conspicuous among these friends of England were a group of East Lothian gentlemen, the Laird of Brunston, Cockburn of Ormiston, and Hugh Douglas of Long Niddry. Of these the first was a paid agent of the English King during the years that followed the death of James V (1543-46), and was

deeply involved in a plot to murder Cardinal Beaton. During these same years John Knox was tutor in the household of Douglas of Long Niddry, and numbered also some of the young Cockburns among his pupils. That he was the chosen associate of such men shows clearly what were his religious and political opinions.

During the years when Knox was quiescent and passive, the new doctrines had spread secretly in Scotland, partly through "the English books," which were surreptitiously imported and read, partly through merchants and mariners who brought the new ideas from abroad, but chiefly through the heroic constancy of those who died for their faith. The list of martyrs is after all small, but it included several men of singular devoutness and attractiveness of character. The first of these was Mr. Patrick Hamilton.<sup>1</sup> Gently born, but contemning the world and its advantages, endowed with princely wit but still more inflamed with godliness, he was learned in philosophy and eager to restore the pure text of Aristotle to the schools; but still more intent on making plain to the unlearned the Gospel, as he had received it from Luther and Melancthon. He was only twenty-four years old when he was burned at St. Andrews in 1528. The "reek which blew from Patrick Hamilton," infecting so many with his heresies, seems to have left Knox unaffected. It was probably two

<sup>1</sup> Hamilton had himself been endowed as a child with the wealthy Abbacy of Ferne. Dying at twenty-four, while there was yet no question of practical reform, it is impossible to pronounce what his action would have been with regard to the profitable corruption of the Church, but it is difficult to believe that self-interest would have weighed with a spirit as pure and ardent as his.

years later in 1530 that he received minor orders. For the next seventeen years he was content to adjudge chalders of victual, to teach children their grammar, and to read the Fathers in his closet; while simple country gentlemen, unlettered craftsmen, single-minded parish priests were going into "the Kingdom" before him. In 1538 a young school-master, George Wishart, was forced to fly to England to escape persecution for teaching the New Testament in Greek. He spent six years between Germany, Switzerland, and Cambridge, and returned to Scotland either in 1543 or 1544. His tall, ascetic figure, in its fustian cloak, recalled the first brothers of the Preaching Orders. Like them, he strove by meekness and patience, by nights spent in prayer, and by constant charity to the poor, to imitate literally the life of Jesus. He had had moments of weakness, as when at Bristol he had "burned his faggot" in sign of public recantation; the calm fearlessness with which he afterwards met persecution and death had been gained only after lonely hours of prayer and tears and pleadings with Almighty God. The plague was raging at Dundee in the summer of 1545; he preached to the stricken in the open street, and passed in and out among them ministering to their needs. When a monk, suborned by the Cardinal, attempted to murder him, his one anxiety was to save the assassin from the anger of the crowd. If Cardinal Beaton was a relentless persecutor, he was moved less by religious convictions than an anxious jealousy over the vested interests of the Church. In Wishart's case, political motives added to his animosity. In the preacher and his friends he saw, not without reason, the secret allies of England.

In the end of the year 1545, Beaton's enmity was drawing a close net round Wishart, and many who had at first resorted to him began to stand aloof. Wounded in spirit and full of foreboding, he continued the more earnestly to use what time remained to him in preaching. "In those days, that are called the Holy days of Yule," he came into East Lothian and stayed in turn in the households of Brunston, Ormiston and Long Niddry.

There was no dogma of the Church of Rome for which Knox in after days felt more contempt than that of Apostolic Succession. There is no more striking instance of the real Apostolic Succession than this meeting between him and Wishart at Long Niddry. Convictions that had been slowly forming in Knox's mind were quickened into life by the touch of Wishart's pure and fervent spirit. The preacher was in that intense state of feeling when insight becomes prophetic vision. He saw, as no one else had done, latent power and passion in the dark, rugged-faced man of forty. To this new disciple he unburdened the sorrows and fears which else found expression only in his nightly prayers. Once, in the Abbey of Haddington, Knox watched him walking up and down behind the high altar, with troubled countenance. He called Knox to him and told him that "he wearied of the world because he perceived that men began to weary of God." After the sermon, he took farewell of his friends as if for the last time. Knox had made himself attendant and body-guard to Wishart, marching in front of him with a two-handed sword, and now he pressed to be allowed to return with him to the House of Ormiston, but Wishart put him gently by, saying, "Nay, return to your bairns; one is sufficient

for a sacrifice." "God grant good rest," he said, as he withdrew that night to his own room. At midnight the house was surrounded by armed men, and he, yielding himself a prisoner, was delivered into the hands of the Cardinal. The gentlest and most reverent pages of all Knox's *History* are those in which he tells of the courage of George Wishart at his trial and his constancy in the hour of death. For him alone of all the men he ever knew Knox seems to have had the feeling of a disciple for a master.

Wishart was not long unavenged. There had long been a plot on foot to take the Cardinal prisoner and deliver him to Henry VIII, alive or dead. It had been originally contrived by paid agents of England, but sorrow and anger for Wishart's death secured the approval and connivance of men of very different character. Early on the 29th of May, while the Cardinal still slept in his chamber, the Castle of St. Andrews was forcibly entered by a body of armed men led by Melville of Raith, a grave and religious gentleman of Fife, William Kirkcaldy, younger, of Grange, and by John and Norman Leslie, personal enemies of the Cardinal. They burst open the door of his private room, and found him helpless and unarmed. "I am a priest, ye will not slay me," he cried with despairing reiteration, but even as he pled for mercy he was struck down on his own hearth, his murderers sternly bidding him repent his sins, especially the death of "that notable instrument of God, Maister George Wishart."

The well-built, sea-girt Castle to which Beaton had trusted so blindly now became the stronghold whence his enemies for fifteen months defied the intermittent attempts of the Regent Arran to dislodge them.



Thither resorted all those who, in Pitscottie's curious phrase, "suspected themselves to be guilty of the said slaughter." The political significance of the murder can be judged by the fact, that amongst the number were the veteran statesman, Sir David Lindsay, the elder Laird of Grange, and the eminent lawyer Henry Balnaves. In spite of the weight of these elder men, the garrison was a wild and lawless band. In the intervals of the siege, they passed freely up and down the little town, and, in their hour of reckless triumph, plundered and distressed the country-side. They inclined, however, to the Reformed doctrines, and a certain John Rough became their chaplain. At Easter (April 10, 1547), Knox arrived in the Castle with three of his pupils. He had been a marked man since Wishart's death, and, wearied of passing from one hiding-place to another, he had desired to go to Germany; but the fathers of his pupils had been earnest with him to continue the education of their sons, and had sent him and them to the Castle of St. Andrews as to a place of safety. It was a strange place for such a purpose. Already the fortress, crowded to excess, was scourged with sickness; lawless men-at-arms were the comrades of the boys and their tutor; and it was from the gossip of the guard-room that Knox probably learned the ghastly circumstances of the Cardinal's death, and the disgusting details of his burial which he retails in his *History* with savage merriment. Sir David Lindsay and Henry Balnaves had shrewd eyes for the qualities of men. They had listened to Knox catechizing his pupils and expounding the Gospel to them. It was resolved that he should be constrained to accept the office of preacher. Upon a certain Sunday,

Rough discoursed "in the public preaching place" on the election of ministers; and at the end of the sermon he suddenly turned directly to where Knox was sitting, and charged him in the name of the congregation then present, that he should not refuse the holy vocation of the Ministry. Then, addressing the people, he said, "Was not this your charge to me?" With one voice they answered, "It was; and we approve it." To Knox this call was as irresistible as the voice of God Himself, but like Jeremiah of old his spirit shrank from the burden suddenly laid upon it. "Whereat," he tells us, "the said John, abashed, burst forth in most abundant tears and withdrew himself to his chamber."

But the call once accepted, Knox laid aside fear and misgivings for ever. His first sermon, preached in the Parish Church before the University, the garrison, the townspeople and an angry body of monks and priests, was a direct challenge to the Romish Church. From Daniel, from St. Paul, from the Apocalypse he had gathered the images of "the great Beast," the "Anti-christ," the "Man of Sin," the "Babylonian Harlot"; these he applied to the Popes and "all the shavelings," tearing open their lives, denouncing their doctrines, deriding their idolatry. To us these images may smack of conventional caricature; they were startlingly new and apt to a congregation who had read neither St. Paul nor Daniel, and who had long regarded the Churchmen with sullen hostility. They greeted Knox's audacity with acclamation. "Others," said they, "hewed the branches of the Papistry, but this man strikes at the root."

For their own credit the Churchmen at St. Andrews could not let such a challenge pass unanswered. The

chief ecclesiastic, Dean Winram, himself secretly inclined to the new doctrines, prudently left the dispute to the friars, to whom Knox submitted a list of the abuses of the Romish Church.

From this dispute it is clear that Knox had already reached the dogmatic position from which he never afterwards moved. In Hamilton and Wishart the new teaching had been a quickening spirit; in Knox the same spirit had taken body in a theological system. Perhaps it was all the more serviceable in that shape, both as a weapon of defence and as a standard round which men might rally.

In June Knox administered the Sacrament after the reformed manner to over two hundred people in the Parish Church. Only once before had the Lord's Supper been celebrated in this form in Scotland. On the day on which he suffered, George Wishart, sitting at breakfast with his gaoler, had used that simple meal as a Sacrament, and had blessed the food and given it to all present.

In the same month the Government tried to bribe the garrison to surrender with the Pope's pardon for the murder. Rome was already mistress of the casuistry that was to become her chief reproach. "Remittimus irremissibile" ran the pardon; a sophistry hardly likely to deceive a lawyer like Balnaves or a statesman like Lindsay. The garrison hoped to be able to prolong the time till help could arrive from England.

But the Regent had a stronger ally than Rome and her casuistries. On the last day of June, a fleet of French galleys suddenly appeared in St. Andrews Bay, bringing soldiers and heavy cannon. For a month the garrison braved it out. They bragged of the thickness

of their walls; Knox assured them "they should be but egg-shells." They boasted, "England will rescue us;" and he retorted, "Ye shall not see them, but ye shall be delivered into your enemy's hands, and shall be carried to a strange country." Recording these words years afterwards in his *History*, Knox put in prophetic shape what was at the time the simple deduction of a shrewd judgment from obvious facts. The French were skilled in artillery and all the art of beleaguering; Henry VIII had died in the previous January; the English Government were disinclined to fulfil his obligation to his Scotch allies; nor did it require a supernatural revelation to recognize the hopeless weakness of a garrison without law or loyalty. "Their corrupt life," Knox told them, "could not escape the judgment of God." Plague was within the Castle; outside, the French cannon, mounted on the College tower and Abbey steeples, raked the walls and court of the fortress. On Saturday the last of July the Castle surrendered. The garrison were careful to yield only to the French Admiral, trusting his promise that they should be taken to France and there either remain at liberty or be allowed to depart to another country. But it was not a habit of the French princes to keep faith with heretics. The more important of the St. Andrews garrison were scattered in French prisons; the rest, and among them Knox, were sent to the galleys.

## CHAPTER II.

### IN ENGLAND.

FOR the nineteen months that followed (August 1547—February 1549), Knox was a slave on a French galley. This means that he formed part of the wretched human machinery that worked those great transport vessels. Railed off from the rest of the ship's company, the rowers, riveted by chains to the deck, worked incessantly at their heavy oars. The squalor of the place was unspeakable; the company coarse and brutal. From the labours and exposure of these months, Knox contracted one of the cruellest diseases that can torture human flesh. From this he suffered all his days. It is a singular merit that he who was so explicit about himself never complains of bodily suffering. His religion, which had such large room for spiritual torments, forbade all murmuring against the torments of the body. Illness was to him either the obstruction of the devil to be triumphed over, or the dispensation of Almighty God, to be patiently borne as the well-merited punishment for sin.

Neither the apparent triumph of Antichrist in Scotland, nor his own helplessness, lying in chains and in the last extremity of sickness, could shake

his confident belief that God had work for him to do in his own country. At the time when few hoped that he would recover, the galley he was in happened to be lying in the North Sea off Dundee. Pointing across the bay to the roofs and towers of St. Andrews, a companion asked him if he knew the place. "Yea, I know it well: for I see the steeple of the place where God first, in public, opened my mouth to His glory; and I am fully persuaded, how weak soever I now appear, I shall not depart this life till that my tongue shall glorify His godly Name in that place." In winter, the *Nôtre Dame*, the galley on which Knox was a prisoner, was laid up off Rouen; Henry Balnaves was lying a captive in the palace of the same town. He contrived secretly to send Knox a treatise he had written in prison on Justification. Having read the work, "to the comfort of his spirit," Knox sent it with his own comments to the faithful in Scotland, adding noble words of courage and hope. "The serpent," he wrote, "hath power only to molest and trouble the flesh, but not to move the spirit from constant adhering to Jesus Christ, nor public professing of His true Word." This "public professing" afforded Knox the satisfaction of deriding the religious observances of his enemies. One day an image of Our Lady—"a painted brod" (picture)—was brought on deck. The officers of the galley, with petty tyranny, thrust it roughly into Knox's hands, bidding him kiss it. He forbade them to trouble him with the accursed idol; they persisted. Then he, "looking round advisedly, cast it into the river, and said, 'Let Our Lady now save herself: she is light enough: let her learn to swim.'" In relating this "merry fact," Knox adds significantly,

"After that was no Scottishman urged with that idolatry."

Early in 1549 deliverance came. The English Government negotiated with the French King the release of the Scottish prisoners. It was a tardy recognition on the part of the Privy Council of the fact that the St. Andrews garrison had been the late King's allies and had fought in his quarrel.

The Protector Somerset had probably a purpose of his own in bringing Knox to England. The condition of religion in that country was confused and shifting. Before he died, Henry VIII himself had grown averse to persecution and more tolerant of innovations. After his death (January 1547) changes took place so sweeping as almost to be revolutionary.

Somerset, who had seized the Protectorship on the death of Henry, was a Protestant of an advanced type. The boy-king was surrounded by Protestant tutors. Amongst the bishops several were distinctly Protestant. Cranmer himself was gradually drifting into a Protestantism that in some points was more akin to Geneva than to Wittenberg. In London and in the towns of the eastern sea-board many of the citizens were Protestant by conviction; but the bulk of the people was obstinately conservative and resented further innovation in ritual or teaching. It was part of Somerset's plan for forcing the Reformation on the people, to send preachers of approved doctrine into all parts of the country. He must have heard of Knox's power in the pulpit, for on his arrival the latter was dispatched at once to Berwick as a licensed preacher.

Berwick was a garrison town, and the first congregation Knox had in England was made up of much

the same rough elements as the congregation he had had at St. Andrews. The Evangelical message which Knox brought to these self-willed, ignorant men has always had a strange power over soldiers by reason of its definiteness and emphasis. The images that came most readily to him in preaching or exhorting were all drawn from the camp and the battle-field. "Though the battle appear strong, your Captain is inexpugnable," he writes. And again, "Abide, stand and call for His support, and so the enemies which now affray you shall be confounded." When, early in 1551, he was removed to Newcastle, he carried with him his own following. "Many Scots resorted to Newcastle chiefly for his fellowship." Otherwise, he found himself in hostile surroundings. The North was peculiarly conservative in religion; the influence of Bishop Tunstall—"dreaming Durham," as Knox nicknamed the friend of More and Erasmus—was adverse to the Reformation. The authorities in Newcastle looked with dislike on the new preacher who refused even to conform to the ritual prescribed in the Prayer-Book.

But the Government, eager to press the Reformation on the reluctant country, needed men like Knox. In December 1551 he was appointed one of King Edward's Chaplains, along with five others all chosen from the more extreme school. In January 1552 the Duke of Somerset died on the scaffold; but, though Somerset was gone, there was no change in the policy of the Government. Northumberland, the ambitious rival whose malignity had precipitated Somerset's fate, with rapid calculation, determined to throw in his lot with the advanced party among the Reformers. With the simple readiness of dogmatic theologians to believe



nothing but good of those who give adherence to their formulas, many of the extreme Protestants were eager to acknowledge Northumberland as their champion. Even the clear-sighted Hooper wrote of him, "To tell the truth, England cannot do without him. He is a most holy and fearless instrument of the Word of God." No such flattering words fell from the lips or pen of Knox. He openly lamented the death of Somerset, both in Newcastle and in other places, much to the chagrin of the authorities. He was "compelled of conscience" to blame that "ungodly breach of charity" by which Northumberland had procured the death of "his innocent friend."

In the summer of 1552 Northumberland was at Newcastle as Warden of the North. Knox boasts that he preached before the great man with perfect plainness of speech. Whether offended or not, the Duke was astute enough to recognize in the preacher a man whom it was worth while to conciliate, or at least to remove from his own neighbourhood. Knox came to London in his train in October 1552, and was generally spoken of as the "Duke's chaplain." It was, however, as "King's chaplain" that he had been summoned to London to preach in his turn at Court. His first sermon arrested instant attention. Under the date October 12, 1552, a foreign divine in London wrote to Bullinger the Zurich Reformer: "Some disputes have arisen amongst the Bishops, in consequence of a sermon by a pious preacher, chaplain to the Duke of Northumberland, preached before the King and Council, in which he inveighed with great freedom against the kneeling at the Lord's Supper. This good man—a Scotsman by nation—has so wrought upon the minds

of many, that we may hope some good to the Church will at length arise from it."

It happened to be the moment when the liturgical forms of the Church of England were under consideration. The Second Prayer-Book of Edward VI. was going through the press during October 1552. It contained a rubric enjoining kneeling as the proper attitude for receiving the Sacrament. Those Prayer-Books which were printed in the end of September, had that rubric without comment; those that appeared after October 27th had, inserted in the Communion Office, a note explaining that the attitude of kneeling is "well meant for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgments of the benefits of Christ therein given . . . but thereby no adoration is intended . . . either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine . . . or unto any Corporal presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood."

This note is still appended to the Communion Office of the Book of Common Prayer, and is known as the "Black Rubric." That its presence there is partly at least due to Knox's influence is rendered probable by the remark of a Catholic opponent: "A runagate Scot," said Dr. Weston, in dispute with Latimer at Oxford (1554), "did take away the adoration or worshipping of Christ in the Sacrament; by whose procurement it was put into the last Prayer-Book." Kneeling at the Sacrament was no idle question of ritual; it involved one of the main articles in dispute between the Church of Rome and the Reformed Churches. Knox's chief concern was how this new enactment, even in its modified form, would affect the congregations in Berwick and Newcastle, which he had trained in the austere simplicity of ritual. If they resisted the new

ordinance, peace would be broken; if they submitted, believing it to be wrong, they would wound their consciences; worst of all, if they accepted it willingly, they would fall from the purity of their first belief. For the sake of peace and to avoid all cause of offence, Knox forced himself to counsel submission. He even did such violence to his own instincts as to speak of rites and ceremonies as "things of smaller weight," though he added, with passionate emphasis, "that he would gladly die, if thereby he could establish that order that God's truth hath planted among you."

This pastoral devotion was but ill deserved by the congregation at Berwick. They appear to have shown a "godly jealousy" over the worldly promotion of their pastor, and Knox, arrogant to his enemies, was at all times painfully sensitive to the opinion of those he considered the "faithful." It is pathetic to hear him plead that they, "whose offence I more fear than my own life," "should not be slandered nor offended, as that some spirit of pride was of late crept into me." He had proved his disinterestedness by refusing one of the highest honours the Church of England had to offer. In the end of October, Northumberland had written to Cecil (already Secretary of State) suggesting that Knox might be made Bishop of Rochester, "an act which would be both for God's service and the King's." He might have added, "and for the convenience of the Duke of Northumberland." He had in fact a scheme for breaking up the diocese of Durham and appropriating part of the princely estates, and the presence of the clear-sighted, plain-spoken preacher would not further this plan. The vacant see of Rochester would dispose handsomely of Knox; the

Scottish preacher, he added, "would be a whetstone to sharpen the Archbishop of Canterbury, as well as a confounder of the Anabaptists."

To Northumberland's disgust, Knox roundly refused to come into the plan. "I do return him," wrote the Duke, in high dudgeon, after an interview with Knox in November, "because I love not to do with men who be neither grateful nor pleasurable."

Ostensibly Knox refused this promotion because he disapproved of many things in the Church of England—the absence of Church Discipline for one thing, the wealth and political influence of the bishops for another. Still, Hooper was as uncompromisingly Puritan as Knox, and Hooper had accepted the see of Gloucester. In reality, Knox's reason for refusing went deeper than any single scruple. He felt profoundly the unreality and insecurity of the Reformation in England. A year later, when the evil times had come and he himself was in exile, he wrote: "What moved me to refuse, and that with displeasure of all men, those high promotions? Assuredly the foresight of troubles to come. How oft have I said that the time would not be long that England would give me bread?"

Even to a less penetrating eye the state of the country was deplorable enough. The majority of the people were divided into those who sullenly held to the old faith and those who rushed headlong into licence and stupid irreverence. The Court was torn with factions; Edward was failing in health; Mary, the next heir, was a bigoted Catholic. Her supporters were watching their chance and busily intriguing, while, reckless of justice and the feeling of the country, Northumberland was plotting to keep the power in his

own hand. Even the Reformers could not deceive themselves as to the condition of the country. With an irony that cannot be quite unconscious, one of the foreign divines wrote to Bullinger, "Religion is indeed prospering, but the wickedness of those who profess the Gospel is wonderfully on the increase."

The only expressions of public opinion came from the pulpit. All through Lent (1553) divines of the more Puritan school preached before the dying boy, exposing the falsehood and greed of his ministers. Their tongues were, in no case, "tempered by holy water of the Court," but perhaps none spake so plainly as Knox. Under the transparent veil of Shebna, Achitophel and Judas, he described the "crafty, covetous, wicked, and ungodly councillors," who were probably all present at the sermon. That there might be no uncertainty as to his meaning, he ended with unfaltering emphasis, "I am greatly afraid that Achitophel be Councillor"—and all the Court glanced at Northumberland—"that Judas bear the purse"—this application was doubtless as clear as the other to his hearers, though it is now uncertain—"and that Shebna be scribe, controller, and treasurer"—and all present recognized Paulet, Marquis of Winchester. This was the last time Knox preached at Court. The King was removed to Greenwich in April, and lay there, slowly dying, for two months, while greed and ambition intrigued to the last round his bed.

Edward died on July 6, and at once the country was plunged into confusion. The excitement spread to remote villages. Knox was at this time on a missionary tour through Buckinghamshire, and on July 16 he preached in the Parish Church of Amersham;

and there, before an excited and partly hostile auditory, he took up his lament for England: "Oh, England, thou shalt be plagued and brought to desolation by the means of those whose favour thou seekest, and by whom thou art procured to fall from Christ, and to serve Antichrist."

Knox was in London when Mary was proclaimed Queen; but the "fires of joy" and ill-timed rejoicing of the deluded people only deepened his foreboding. The immediate effect of the change of government on him personally was to stop his stipend and reduce him to absolute poverty. When he left London, on his way North in December, ten groats comprised his whole fortune, but "that little troubles me" is his characteristic comment. That autumn he found safety in constant travelling and solace in constant preaching.

The ostensible toleration with which Mary's reign began deceived no one. By the end of October the foreign divines were expelled, and several bishops were in prison. It was an urgent question with all the Protestant preachers whether prudence counselled flight, or duty demanded quiet abiding at their posts. Cranmer had been accounted timid, but he remained at Lambeth; many another humble professor showed the same steadfastness. There had been no sign of faltering on Knox's part. Everywhere in those last months he had proclaimed the same message, "The last trumpet is blown, within the realm of England; let every man prepare himself for the battle."

The 20th of December was the limit fixed by Mary's Government for toleration of the Reformed services. About that date Knox arrived in Newcastle. He was in the midst of enemies on the alert to injure him; a

messenger carrying his private letters was stopped and searched; his friends urged him, even with tears, to save himself by flight. He happened to be worn with labour, perplexed and discouraged in his private affairs, tormented with his chronic malady. The decision was of necessity hurried and Knox yielded to the entreaties of his friends. He is himself the only authority for his conduct; it is obvious that he was hardly clear about his own motives. "Some will then ask: 'Why did I fly?' Assuredly I cannot tell, but of one thing I am sure, the fear of death was not the chief cause of my flying."

The letter containing this passage was written at Dieppe, in the first days of solitude and reaction after the excitement of the escape. He was restless for lack of his accustomed preaching; he was full of regret for friends in England; above all he had an uneasy sense that his flight might be adversely interpreted. "Albeit," he writes at the end of the same letter, "I have at the beginning of this battle appeared to play the faint-hearted and feeble soldier (the cause I remit to God), yet my prayer is that I may be restored to the battle. . . . For a few sermons by me to be made in England, my heart at this hour would be content to suffer more than nature were able to contain, as by the grace of the most mighty and most merciful God, shall one day be known."

## CHAPTER III.

### ENGLISH FRIENDS.

KNOX was forty-four when he first arrived in Berwick. Holy orders had cut him off in early life from the nearer domestic ties, and had probably kept him remote from familiar friendships. There are, in his later life, only two slight references to the pupils and friends of East Lothian days. It was in England that he first formed ties of enduring intimacy. Singularly enough, though he never failed to vociferate his belief in the immeasurable superiority, spiritual and intellectual, of man, his warmest and most confidential friendships were with women. Solitary and often ailing, he needed the comfortable kindness of women; in return he gave unfailing sympathy and counsel in their spiritual life to devout "sisters in Christ," who had hardly had time to unlearn the habit of resorting to a father confessor.

The conflict between new convictions and old authorities, which was disturbing every realm in Europe, must have been painfully re-enacted in many private households. This was the case in the family of Richard Bowes, Governor of the Castle of Norham at the time Knox arrived in Berwick. He himself, it seems, was "unconvinced in religion," but his wife, Elizabeth Aske,



had adopted the Reformed religion at a time when it was perilous to do so. In spite of the opposition of all her friends, this lady clung to her faith with a persistence that is pathetic; but perplexed by argument and harassed by the constant efforts to realize the spiritual advantages for which she had sacrificed ease and friendship, she fell alternately into nervous self-scrutiny and a state of despairing doubt concerning the truths of religion.

This spiritual hypochondria, though not peculiar to extreme Protestantism, is apt to be fostered by the stress laid in that form of faith on "inward assurance." The Catholic Church, by enjoining external acts, may stupefy the soul or raise it to exaltation, but at least it lightens the weight of personal responsibility. Modern religion, allying itself with active benevolence, leaves Christians scant leisure for the care of their own souls. Protestantism, placing salvation in an inward appropriation of spiritual mysteries, laid a weight on the individual reason and conscience that often proved overwhelming. To understand the reality and pathos of these self-questionings and spiritual terrors, we must go to the pages of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. No one can dismiss as mere morbidity the sufferings of the tender conscience and valiant spirit of Mr. Fearing. We need the recollection of that beautiful picture to keep us in patience with such a weariful Mrs. Much-Afraid as Elizabeth Bowes. From the first time she heard Knox preach she judged him to be one of the faithful, and soon communication between the two became constant, either by speech or by correspondence. Her letters have, fortunately perhaps, perished. From his answers, it is plain that she was dexterous in wresting texts to

her own tormenting and unwearied in discovering new (and often impossible) temptations. Oddly enough Knox seems never to have lost interest in her monotonous complaints. Only once is there a little gentle impatience in his reply to her; "My daily labours must now increase, and therefore spare me as much as you may. My old malady troubles me sore and nothing is more contrary to my health than writing." Usually however, this singular, religious friendship seems to have been as great a solace to him as it was to her. Especially in the beginning of the correspondence, Knox saw in Mrs. Bowes' experiences "the very mirror and glass" of that inner life which, at this time, he cultivated so sedulously. The friends discussed their temptations with curious particularity. "Call to your mind what I did standing at the cupboard in Alnwick," wrote Knox, in one of his letters. "In very deed I thought that no creature had been tempted as I was." But though "dolour complained to dolour" on terms of apparent equality, Knox at times asserted the superiority of the man and the preacher. "If I," he wrote, "to whom God has given greater gifts am so wrapt into misery . . . if such wretched wickedness remain in God's chief ministers, what wonder albeit the same remain in you?"

Considering the ample leisure Mrs. Bowes spent on her correspondence it is surprising to learn that she was the mother of twelve children. The fifth of these was a daughter not yet out of her teens. This shadowy Marjorie, of whom we catch but faint, pathetic glimpses, became the affianced wife of Knox before he left Berwick for Newcastle early in (1551). It may have been by her own desire. The romance of self-devotion

has for some young girls a stronger attraction than the less illusory romance of love. Her relations however hotly accused Mrs. Bowes of having made up the matter with Knox. Not unreasonably, Richard Bowes' fatherly kindness objected to an elderly suitor of uncertain prospects. Besides, there remained in the mind of the ordinary Englishman of that time a marked distaste for married clergymen. The prejudice was shared by many of Knox's Berwick friends, and the preacher, who loved to plead the Divine sanction for all his acts, was irritated by it into protest. "I do purpose and intend," he wrote to them, "to obey God, embracing such as He has offered unto me (rather) than to please and flatter man that unjustly holdeth the same from me."

Among the numerous letters to Mrs. Bowes, there is a solitary one to Marjorie. It begins, "Dearly beloved sister in the common faith of Jesus our Saviour;" and ends enigmatically, "I think this be the first time I ever wrote to you." Does the "I think" chronicle prosaic doubt or endearing emphasis?

When the evil days came under Mary, and Knox was a fugitive, mother and daughter held true to him with heroic persistence, and faced much painful opposition from their relatives on his behalf. "I was assured of your trouble," wrote Knox in September 1553, "and of the battle of my own flesh"—by this ungraceful image he always alludes to his bride—"before God, and I suspect a greater to lie upon you both than that your letters declare unto me." The thought of these lonely women fighting his battle stirred a chivalrous chord in this rather tardy lover. "It becomes me now to jeopard my life for the comfort and deliverance of my own flesh; both fear and friendship of all earthly creature laid

aside." In pursuance of this resolve, Knox went on November 6 to see the head of the house, Sir Robert Bowes, Marjorie's uncle, in London. He found the choleric old knight "not only a despiser, but also a taunter of God's messengers (God be merciful unto him)." The preacher braved out the interview with a "good countenance," but the "despiteful words had so pierced his heart that his life was bitter unto him." Though he was even inclined to acquiesce rather tamely in the decision "that such things as I have desired, and ye and others have long desired, are never like to come to pass," yet he undertook the perilous journey to Newcastle in December, chiefly in the hope of seeing Mrs. Bowes and Marjorie. His coming had been carefully concealed from mother and daughter by their relatives, and, as danger closed round him, Knox recognized the impossibility of seeing either of them "till God offer some better occasion."

This friendship with Mrs. Bowes was not the only intimacy Knox formed in England. In a letter written to her from London in the winter of 1552-53, he described himself at the time her letter reached him, as sitting with "three poor honest women" weeping together "over the assaults of the enemy." Mrs. Bowes' letter, being of course germane to the matter, was read aloud. "Oh, would to God I might speak with that person," cried one of the matrons present, "for I perceive there are more tempted than I."

This scene may have taken place in the house either of Mrs. Locke or Mrs. Hickman, two merchants' wives in London. They seem to have been rich, and, after the manner of devout women in all ages, they showed a "special care" for the comfort of their spiritual guide.

For the ten following years Mrs. Anna Locke was Knox's most valued and confidential friend. He writes to her of the progress of the Reformation in Scotland, commissions her to get him books, consults her as to the possibility of raising funds among the faithful. He resolves her doubts, but they are reasonable doubts concerning the duty of attending the imperfect services of the Church of England, very different from the infirmities of poor Mrs. Bowes. To Mrs. Locke is addressed that golden sentence in one of Knox's letters which touches us by its human humility infinitely more than the "sobs" and "dolours" of his self-abasement before God. "Of nature, I am churlish, and in conditions different from many; yet one thing I ashame not to affirm, that familiarity once thoroughly contracted was never yet broken on my default. The cause may be that I have rather need of all than that any have need of me."

## CHAPTER IV.

ON THE CONTINENT (1554—1555).

THE desire to be within reach of news from England kept Knox at Dieppe till the end of February. He was full of passionate solicitude for the congregations he had left in London, Berwick, and Newcastle. Cut off from the spoken word of exhortation, he addressed a letter to the "faithful" in these places, wishing them "continuance in godliness to the end." He reminded them, how constantly, in the days of seeming prosperity, he had sounded in their ears the judgment that must fall on the country for its neglect and contempt of God's Word. His authority for that prophecy had not been the "marvels of Merlin," but the plain truth of God's Word, His invincible justice, His dealings with His people Israel as revealed to the prophets. On the same infallible authorities Knox now proclaimed that the punishment begun at the household of faith must shortly fall, with ten-fold weight, on the idolatrous children of disobedience. "Dear brethren," he writes, "if idolatry continue as it has begun, no more may England escape God's vengeance than God Himself may lose His justice." The first motive he urges for the avoidance of idolatry, is that they who share in the sin

will certainly be included in the vengeance which must shortly follow. Far more emphasis is laid on this old message of the prophets, the terrible judgments of God on unrighteous nations, than on the rewards and punishment of a future life. These indeed are neither forgotten nor softened. "For avoiding idolatry ye may, perchance, be compelled to leave your native land; but obeyers of idolatry . . . shall be compelled, body and soul, to burn in Hell. For avoiding idolatry your substance shall be spoilt; for obeying idolatry Heavenly riches shall be lost." But it is characteristic of Knox that the strongest incentive he can urge for avoiding "fellowship with the filthy abomination," is the natural love and care of a man for his children. "The only way to leave our children blessed and happy is to leave them rightly instructed in God's true religion." "Your patience and constancy," he declares, "shall be a louder trumpet to your posterity, than were all the voices of the prophets that instructed you: and so is not the trumpet ceased so long as any boldly resisteth idolatry."

This letter to his old congregations was written at the end of February, "from a sore-troubled heart, upon my departure from Dieppe, whither God knoweth." Switzerland, that hospitable stronghold of the Reformation, was the only place whither a fugitive Protestant could turn. For two months Knox went from one religious centre to another, conversing with eminent divines, everywhere received as a guest and brother. But his heart could find no rest out of hearing of his friends. By May he was back at Dieppe eagerly looking for news from England. When he wrote his first letter he had believed that the "battle would be short." The worst trial he contemplated for the faithful was

exile or the loss of worldly substance. But the fugitives who daily arrived at Dieppe from England in the months of May and June brought news of relentless persecution and of a political alliance subversive of the Reformation. In April Latimer, Ridley, and Cranmer had been condemned (though they did not suffer till a year later) and a marriage with Philip of Spain, detested by Catholic and Protestant Englishmen alike, was imminent. For a moment Knox thought of returning to England; if he were assured of the support of his friends he would put his own life in jeopardy "to let men see what may be done with a safe conscience in these dolorous and dangerous days," but the fear of involving others as well as himself in danger withheld him. Stirred to the depths by the news he heard daily, he wrote in July his famous *Admonition to the Professors of God's Truth in England*. It is more urgent and passionate than the former letter. In the face of the fires at Smithfield, of prisons packed with notable preachers, and of the "most Catholic King" already on his way to share the imperial crown of England, Knox could no longer declare that the judgments of God are to fall swiftly on the wicked. Rather are these to be suffered to fill up the "cup of their abominations to the brim." Only when they have endured to the uttermost are the faithful to look for deliverance. Though God shall save "from the very throat and bottom of Hell," it will not be in a way easy or pleasing to the flesh. "Of some God will so touch the heart that they will rather . . . go as pilgrims . . . suffering hunger, cold, heat, thirst, weariness, and poverty, than that they will abide . . . in subjection to idolatry." There is another deliverance more swift and certain.



"It may be that God will so strengthen the hearts of some of those that have fainted before, that they will resist idolatry to the death; and that were a glorious and triumphant deliverance." It is the strength of the doctrine preached by Knox that men should believe themselves to be "elected"; elected not to ease nor prosperity, nor speedy deliverance, but to the fiercest trials of flesh and spirit, certain only of this, that God will not suffer His chosen to fail Him in "His battle." It is a faith for heroes; but it has its dark shadow. It teaches that the wicked are also "elected." "There is no hope for their amendment," says Knox; and, in the spirit of the most bloodthirsty of the Psalms, he adds, "Let death devour them in haste; let the earth swallow them up." It would have been prudent if he had kept to general denunciations, but that was not his manner of fighting. Not sin in the abstract but wicked men in high places were his opponents. The "Devil's Gardener," "Bloody Bonner," "blind buzzards," "bloodthirsty wolves," are the missiles he hurls recklessly at the Bishops of Winchester and London, and their brethren. Mary is worse than "Athaliah" and "Herodias' daughter," and is denounced as "false, dissembling, inconstant, proud, and a breaker of promises," the "utter mischief of England." His hot accusation that "under an English name she beareth a Spanish heart," shows how completely Knox shared the English feeling on the subject of her marriage. Heedless of the perilous position of the Protestants in the Emperor's dominions and the destruction that might fall on them, he refers to Charles V as "no less enemy to Christ than ever was Nero"—words that were destined to ring in his ears before many months were past.

It was probably in July that Knox finally quitted Dieppe for Geneva, that spiritual Republic where every member of the Reformed Church had a natural right of citizenship. He was drawn thither, rather than to the more liberal and genial society of Zurich, by the great name of Calvin. Knox had bitterly denounced the absence of all discipline in the English Church; he was eager to see at Geneva "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on earth since the days of the Apostles." That this "perfect school" excited angry opposition in a portion of the citizens, that reaction from its strictness sometimes resulted in secret licentiousness, brought no misgivings to him any more than to Calvin himself. Both believed that it was as much the Divine mission of God's Word to harden the reprobate in sin as to increase the godly in righteousness.

Few men have ever to the same degree as Calvin combined practical and speculative genius. In his own day he was referred to by all Protestant communions as an infallible authority in details of Church Government, as well as on the profoundest theological questions. The very men who dogmatized the right of private judgment into a fundamental article of belief knew no higher exercise for that right than to absorb the dogmas of Calvin. Nor was this ascendancy confined to his own day. For three centuries Reformed Churches, with the exception of the Anglican and Lutheran, have been content to let Calvin do their thinking for them. Knox was not a man of original speculative power, and he found in Calvin's theology a sweep of intellect that brought all things in Heaven and Earth into a self-consistent system, and a practical logic that turned

abstract metaphysics into serviceable dogmas. He was conscious of his own lack of learning, and especially lamented his ignorance of Hebrew. He found ripe knowledge of the Scriptures, of the Fathers, even of Antiquity engrained in the very texture of Calvin's thoughts and dedicated to the sole service of Theology.

In this model city, and in converse with this master-mind, Knox hoped to find that leisure for study that he so ardently desired. But he was not suffered to carry out his intention. In October came a call from the English Church at Frankfort. The little company of English fugitives who had settled in that city were associated with a French congregation, and the Senate had generously granted them a church on the condition that neither congregation should introduce into their services anything displeasing to the other. Of the English society the greater part belonged to the extreme or Puritanic party. To these the opportunity was welcome for discarding many forms enjoined by the Prayer-Book, and for conforming more closely to the foreign Churches. There was a distinct logic in the position of this extreme school. The Protestant Churches, when casting off the yoke of Rome, took up firm ground on the absolute authority of Scripture. It was incumbent on them therefore to justify every change they made in rites or doctrines by the same infallible sanction. Hence Knox's extraordinary proposition that every form of worshipping God *not enjoined in the Scriptures* is idolatry. With less of logic, but with a finer and more humane common-sense, the framers of the English Prayer-Book had decided to retain as much of the old form of worship as was good and pious in itself, and *in no wise opposed to the*

*Scriptures.* These authors of the Prayer-Book were now in prison and about to testify by their death to the sincerity of their work. It was no wonder, therefore, that many of the exiled English Protestants feared "lest, by much altering of the same, they should seem to condemn the chief authorities thereof." Knox had no such scruples. Even in England, when he was one of the King's chaplains, he had never been bound by the prescribed forms. Under his guidance and that of his colleague Whittingham, the services at Frankfort approached more and more to the simplicity of the Genevan worship. Not however without protest from the minority. They had given up the Litany, the surplice, the attitude of kneeling at Communion; they clung to the rest of the ritual. It was resolved that the Prayer-Book should be submitted to the infallible arbiter at Geneva. The account of the various rites and services drawn up by Knox and Whittingham is on the whole fair enough, though contempt is dexterously conveyed by occasional "forsooths," or by such parentheses as "'Then he goeth to the sermon (if there be any).'" As might have been expected, Calvin pronounced against such Popish dregs as he found in the English Prayer-Book. A compromise was arrived at in the Church at Frankfort, and seems to have worked happily enough till March, when a fresh company of English exiles arrived. Many of these were men of eminence in the Church, and chief amongst them was Dr. Cox, tutor and almoner to the late King. On the very first Sunday of their attendance at the service, they insisted on responding loudly, and when admonished, replied roundly that "they would do as they had done in England, and their Church should have an

English face." Taking this up as a challenge, Knox on the same afternoon preached a sermon denouncing the weak places of the Church of England. Confident in the strength of his position, he himself urged that the new-comers should be admitted to a voice in the congregation, when others would have excluded them on a point of order. There was no possibility of any real conciliation. Knox's habitual contempt for the compromising Anglican spirit was increased by his knowledge that one at least of his opponents had in a moment of danger abjured the faith; on the other hand his passionate dogmatism and impatience of all merely human distinctions exasperated men, some of whom were Court bred and accustomed to meet with deference, not to pay it. They had besides brought from England a bitter sense of wrong against Knox. They averred, and only too truly, that "that outrageous pamphlet" of his, the *Admonition to the Professors of God's Truth*, "had added much oil to the flame of persecution in England."

The controversy was at its height when one of Cox's party came secretly to Knox threatening that if he did not withdraw his opposition something would follow. Knox treated the warning with contempt. Thereupon his adversaries suddenly produced the weapon they held in reserve and formally accused him to the Frankfort Senate of "nine articles of high treason against the Emperor, his son Philip, and the Queen of England." The Senate, having reason to think well of the preacher, were at first reluctant to do more than forbid his preaching. But the passages in the *Admonition* relating to Philip and the Emperor were laid before them in Latin, and they were reminded that the

Emperor was at that time at Augsburg, where rumours of Knox and his pamphlet might reach his ears. To avoid all danger and difficulty, they required Knox to leave the city. The night before his departure he preached in his lodgings to a few faithful friends. Next day these accompanied him several miles on his way, and "with great heaviness of heart and plenty of tears committed him to the Lord."

## CHAPTER V.

### SCOTLAND (1555—1556).

DURING the years of Knox's absence from Scotland, the Reformed doctrines had steadily been making way amongst the people. Political conditions had, on the whole, been favourable. The wars with England (1547—1550) had distracted men's minds from their religious differences. In 1554 came a change of government. The Earl of Arran was induced to resign the regency in favour of the ambitious and capable Queen Dowager, Mary of Guise. Always facile and indolent, it cost him little to exchange the thankless cares of government for an estate in France and the sounding title of Duke of Chatelherault. But his politic, masterful brother, Archbishop of St. Andrews, remained a watchful opponent of Mary's government. It became therefore a distinct part of her policy to conciliate the Protestants, as a counter-weight to the Churchmen who might be expected to act under the influence of the Primate. From these causes persecution had practically ceased. From 1550 till 1558 no one suffered in Scotland for religion. The persecution in England, under Mary Tudor, sent many Protestant preachers across the Border. These, earnest and unlettered men for the

most part, seem to have been suffered to preach in different parts of the country, secretly indeed, but unmolested. The Church, in truth, was during these years ineffectually busy in trying to reform abuses in her own bounds, and to create zeal for learning in her members. But she had not life enough to cast out the old evils and to receive the new impulse; she could not, with all her efforts, regain the confidence of the people. In lieu of the sermon, which not one priest in fifty was capable of preaching, a course of instruction in the truths and duties of religion had been drawn up and ordered to be read on Sundays in the parish churches. This admirable compendium of religious teaching, known as *Archbishop Hamilton's Catechism*, failed entirely of its purpose; it was little read and less heeded. The old formulas, the old sanctions, had small interest for people who refused to be satisfied with anything short of a new statement of the relation of man to God, founded on the authority of the Scriptures.

It is a fact curiously significant in the light of later history, that the Reformed doctrines seem to have been accepted first amongst the humbler classes. As early as 1551 a foreign divine, John ab Ulmis, visiting the Scottish Border in the train of the Earl of Dorset, had been struck by this. "There appears to be great firmness and no little religion among the people of Scotland, but . . . the chiefs of that nation resist and oppose the truth in every possible way." But if the bulk of the Nobility were slow to receive the new religious teaching, there was another aspect of the Reformation of which they were eagerly receptive. Eight years earlier in 1543, Arran had complained to



Sadler that the nobles were such firm Papists that they would not admit the Reformation, "unless the sin of covetousness bring them into it." The "sin of covetousness" was destined to play a large part in the history of the Scottish Reformation. Closer diplomatic relations with the wealthy nobility of England and the magnificent Court of France, had made the Scottish nobles of the sixteenth century bitterly conscious of their poverty. On the question of "teinds" and the scandalous wealth of the Churchmen, they were prepared to receive the new teaching with open minds.

While this is true of the majority, it is fair to say that there was a minority whose acceptance of the Reformed teaching was the result of sincere conviction. In 1543, that shrewd observer, Sir Ralph Sadler, had noted that the younger men were favourable to "Christ's cause," though they had then too little influence or experience to act with effect. The young men of 1543 were the middle-aged, influential men of 1555. Sadler had singled out the young Lord Kilmaurs for his wit and learning, as well as for his favourable disposition toward the Reformation. In his youth as Lord Kilmaurs he had satirized the religious orders with his pen; now (1555) as Lord Glencairn he was ready to serve the Reformation with counsel and with sword. Ayrshire—where his territorial influence was great—had always been a home of heresies; Ayrshire lairds, Lord Ochiltree, Campbell of Kinyeancleuch, and others, were amongst the earliest and firmest Protestants. On the other side of the country the lairds of Fife and Angus were equally enlightened. Amongst these the name of Erskine of Dun was honourably known for his services to liberal education and his devotion to the new

doctrines. A more recent convert was the Earl of Argyle who had received the new teaching in his old age, and at his death solemnly charged his son to suppress superstition and set forward the Evangel of Christ Jesus.

The most remarkable, however, of those who favoured the Reformation were two young men, William Maitland of Lethington, Secretary to the Queen Regent, and Lord James Stuart, an illegitimate son of James V. The former was once described by Queen Elizabeth as the "finest wit of any in Scotland." In knowledge of the world, in keen and polished intelligence, in personal fascination he was the equal of any at the English Court. To the blunt, headlong judgments of his countrymen he was a constant puzzle. The nickname of "Mitchell Wylie" (a corruption of Machiavelli) indicates the mistrust with which he was regarded by the vulgar. Even his equals failed to see, in the subtleties and changes of his political course, his adherence to one great practical ideal, the prosperity of Scotland through alliance with England. He recognized that this ideal was incompatible with devotion to Rome and adherence to the French alliance. If never profoundly influenced by religion, he saw clearly, and at an early stage, the necessity of moderate reform.

If Maitland was a puzzle to his contemporaries, Lord James from first to last was approved as an honest, blameless and religious man. But for the historical student, the obviously virtuous patriot offers a more baffling problem than the obviously subtle diplomatist. Both were zealous for the prosperity of Scotland, and sought to secure it through alliance with England; both favoured the Reformation, but Lord

James placed the religious question before the political, while to Lethington the religious question was only important in so far as it furthered the political. Lord James was sincerely convinced in the matter of religion; Lethington had the same ready acquaintance with current divinity as a cultivated politician of our day might have with the theory of evolution. Cecil said once of Lord James that he was not unlike "neither in person nor qualities to be a king's son." Perhaps the fact that he *was* a king's son is the key to his character. He was greedy for power with the not ignoble greed of one who has all the hereditary capacities and instincts of a great ruler. His false position, the nearest possible to the throne, yet divided from it by an impassable gulf, made him politic, reserved and subtle. In 1555 he was three-and-twenty years old, and had been destined for the Church—indeed, he already bore the title of Prior of St. Andrews, and enjoyed the revenues of that benefice—but had determined against taking orders. He had made Knox's acquaintance in the end of the year 1552, when he passed through London on his way from France.

It was possibly by his suggestion that Knox was, in the summer of 1555, invited to return to his own country. Knox had been nine years absent from Scotland, and had apparently kept up little correspondence with any friends there. So completely had he identified his interest and sentiment with England that he could write with perfect sincerity, "Sometimes I have thought that impossible it had been so to have removed my affections from the realm of Scotland, that any realm could have been equally dear unto me . . . but God I take to witness . . . that the troubles present in the

realm of England are double more dolorous to my heart than ever were the troubles of Scotland."

The quiet life of study at Geneva had been grateful to his soul after the contentions of Frankfort, and the invitation from Scotland found him loth to leave "the den of his own ease." By his own confession, his chief motive in undertaking the journey was to see Marjorie Bowes and her mother. "You alone," he writes to the latter, "did draw me from the rest of quiet study." He spent some time in Berwick, and it was probably on this visit that he was married. There is no allusion however to that event in his letter, only a fervent thanksgiving that they two were among the faithful daughters "whom God had still left in Sodom." "In the end of the harvest" he passed into Scotland. He was startled by the welcome he received in Edinburgh among brethren, who with "fervent thirst were night and day groaning and sobbing for the Bread of Life." "Oh, sweet were the death that should follow such forty days in Edinburgh, as here I have had three," he wrote to Mrs. Bowes; and again, "If I had not seen it with my eyes in my own country, I would not have believed it." He was indeed in "his own country," among a people as fervid and self-willed as himself; a people of strong logical brains and tenacious of convictions, and yet easily moved by eloquence to tears, tumult, or fierce, derisive laughter. "The trumpet blew the old sound, three days together, till private houses of indifferent largeness could not contain the voice of it." It is always a war-note that Knox sounds through that mighty trumpet of his; "Let men prepare for the battle." After all it is the only possible message for men who, on the morrow, may have to give an account

of their faith before the world's tribunals, and, the day after, bear witness to it at the stake. To Knox, as to Bunyan, this world was but the battle-field where God and the Devil waged perpetual and, to the discerning eye, visible warfare. In his sermons he makes Christ address Satan as the hero of some primitive epic might defy his antagonist. "Do what thou canst, I shall not flee the place of battle. If thou become victor, thou mayst still continue in possession of thy kingdom. If thou canst not prevail against Me, then must thy prey be taken from thee." It was part of the power of Knox's preaching that he mingled with these concrete images strains of mysticism, as when he assures the faithful that their victory is certain, "for in the cross of Christ, always, is included a secret and hid victory, never well known till the sufferer appears altogether exterminate." It was with such lofty consolations that Knox, in those November days, ministered to the troubled soul of a dying woman in Edinburgh. "And she, shortly thereafter, slept in the Lord Jesus to the no small comfort of those who saw her blessed departing." This scene in the house of James Baron, burgess of Edinburgh, has a place in Knox's *History* as important as the deaths of kings or the fate of empires.

At all hours of day and night crowds resorted secretly to hear him preach in some quiet corner of the great, tall houses which lay back from the High Street in a labyrinth of wynds and courts; but in public many still resorted to Mass for the avoidance of scandal. This matter was earnestly discussed one evening, in the lodgings of Erskine of Dun, between Knox and young Maitland of Lethington. Lethington, who, for dialectical purposes, knew his Bible as well as Knox himself,

defended this practice by the example of St. Paul paying his vows in the Temple. "I greatly doubt," replied Knox, with a disregard for Scriptural authority he was never known to permit to any one but himself, "I greatly doubt whether James's commandment or Paul's obedience were of the Holy Ghost."

Knox was in Scotland all that winter; as the guest of Erskine of Dun, of Lord Glencairn and others, he travelled through Ayrshire, Angus, Fife, and even into Argyleshire, preaching and celebrating the Communion in the Reformed manner. For some time the authorities were, or feigned to be, ignorant of his movements. One day it was asked at Court who the preacher might be who drew such crowds to hear him at Ayr. Some suggested that it was another English refugee. "Nay, no Englishman, but Knox, that knave!" cried the Bishop of Glasgow testily. For her own credit the Church could not afford to go on ignoring the "runagate priest," who was the friend and guest of some of the most important men in the country. Knox was accordingly summoned to appear at the Blackfriars on May 15, 1556; but his appearance in Edinburgh with a train of friends sobered the zeal of the Churchmen. Without reason given they let the summons drop, and Knox thereafter preached to larger audiences than before. One evening Lord Glencairn brought the Earl of Marischall to hear him. It occurred to both these noblemen that much might be gained if Knox were to address a plea for toleration and reform to the Queen Dowager, whom they believed to be both candid and moderate in her opinions. The result was that *Letter to the Regent*, which is one of the least impressive of Knox's writings. He never wielded a courtly pen.

His first aim in addressing princes was always to prove himself one "of the rare number that boldly and plainly speak the native verity in presence of their Princes." So concerned is he with the "plainness" and "boldness," that he almost neglects to expound the "native verity." The letter itself was full of emphasis and menace; it was not convincing nor persuasive. It fell moreover on the barrenest of soils. Mary of Guise, with frivolous blindness, merely turned the letter into ridicule. "Please you, my Lord, to read a Pasquill," she said, handing the letter to one of the bishops. It was a foolish mockery, but is hardly worth the bitter indignation with which Knox records it.

Knox's stay in Scotland had been one prolonged triumph, but the time was not yet ripe for revolution. He himself seems hardly to have contemplated the possibility of carrying reform by violence. Early in the summer of 1556, a call came from the remnant of his Frankfort congregation, now collected at Geneva. This he accepted without hesitation. But before he left he was careful to draw up instructions how the faithful, in the absence of ministers, might edify and confirm one another in the faith. In their own households men are "bishops and kings," "their wives, children, servants and family, are their bishopric and charge." For fear of the old sophistry that as long as men worshipped God in private they may bow to idols in public, Knox is careful to add, "Neither yet may ye do this so quietly that ye will admit no witness." He had misgivings that this incitement to a fearless confession before men came with little weight from one who had suddenly left the country for fear of persecution. He wrote from Geneva to certain "godly

sisters" in Edinburgh, "If any object that I follow not the counsel which I give to others, for my fleeing the country declareth my fear; I answer, I bind no man to my example."

He left Scotland in July 1556. His wife and her mother had preceded him to Dieppe. It was probably for the sake of the spiritual ministrations of her son-in-law that Mrs. Bowes had taken the extraordinary step of leaving her husband and remaining children. Perhaps domestic life at Norham was simplified by her absence.



## CHAPTER VI.

### KNOX'S POLITICAL WRITINGS.

IMPLICIT in the teaching of the Reformation, were principles that later centuries were to apply to political and social conditions with revolutionary effect. Liberty of conscience, which was the result of the Reformation though not the aim of the Reformers, was sure in time to bring liberty of speech and of action in its train. Men who believed themselves to be predestined to fulfil the will of God could no longer be bound in all things by the will of the temporal ruler; on the contrary, they found themselves often constrained to oppose it. The teaching which laid an equal weight of responsibility on each individual soul, allowing not even the ignorant nor weak to confide their salvation to an ecclesiastical system, was bound sooner or later to demand a more equal share of opportunity for all men. But it was to take several generations before these principles passed into the conscience and reason of men and were freely applied to politics. The immediate practical effect of the Reformation was greatly to strengthen the hands of the temporal ruler. To break the power of the Pope effectually, the wide organization of the Church had to be brought into obedience to the civil

authority. This was done most simply by transferring the spiritual power undiminished from the Pope to the secular ruler. The English Reformers were not merely servile, they were practical when they recognized the Prince as supreme head of the Church. In Germany also the Reformers looked to enlightened Princes to forward and establish their work. Their Catholic opponents industriously accused the Reformers of desiring "to subvert order and government . . . to abolish all laws, destroy the distinctions of rank and property, and, in short, turn all things upside-down." It was their anxiety to disarm these accusers that lay at the root of the harshness with which the Reformers denounced the sedition of the Anabaptist movement and the Peasants' Rising. Even Luther denied the peasant blood that was in him and urged on the nobles to vengeance. It is as surprising to find Calvin cautiously and almost abjectly conservative, as to find Luther harsh and narrow; but it is not the less true, that the man who formulated the religious creed of Cromwell and Milton, preached, in matters political, nothing more heroic than passive obedience. "If we keep before our minds," he writes, "the fact that even the most iniquitous kings are appointed by the same decree which establishes all regal authority, we will never entertain the seditious thought, that a king is to be treated according to his deserts, and that we are not bound to act the part of good subjects to him who does not in his turn act the part of a king to us." In his theology Knox was content to be a mouth-piece of the ideas of Calvin; in his political convictions he repudiated the cautious counsels of his master. He came of a race where personal independ-

ence was a passion with the lowest as with the highest. As a student in Major's class-room in Glasgow, there had rung in his ears sentences like these, "That which is generally called nobility is a windy thing of human devising. There is absolutely no true nobility, but virtue and the evidence of virtue." Even in England under Edward VI, where the power of the Crown was used to forward the cause he loved, Knox had grown restive under its authority. "For, what then was heard," he cries impatiently, "but 'the King's proceedings, the King's proceedings must be obeyed. It is enacted in Parliament, therefore it must be obeyed.'" At Mary's accession he had seen England "set forth for a prey to foreign nations, the blood of the members of Jesus Christ most cruelly to be shed, and the monstrous empire of a cruel woman to be the only occasion of all these miseries." Indignation set his mind to work fiercely on the whole question of submission to the temporal ruler. Himself unlearned and comparatively obscure, he turned for guidance to the men of weight and wisdom. He addressed to Bullinger questions on the limits of obedience to the ruler in things spiritual, and on the lawfulness of feminine rule. The answers of Bullinger were extremely prudent; men must beware of acting with precipitancy, lest they occasion mischance to many worthy persons. On the whole he seems to be of the opinion, "that it is a hazardous thing for godly persons to set themselves in opposition to political regulations." When Knox was in Scotland in 1555-56, he persuaded himself that the whole community was eager to receive the new teaching and that the main obstruction lay in the obstinacy and frivolity of the ruler, and that ruler a

woman! He returned to Geneva with much food for thought.

In May 1557 two of Knox's Edinburgh friends arrived in Geneva bearing a letter signed by Glencairn, Lorne, Lord James Stewart, and Erskine of Dun.<sup>1</sup> It urged him to return to Scotland, and in October he left his household and church at Geneva. In the interval his friends in Scotland had seen reasons to withdraw from the bold policy they had adopted. On his arrival at Dieppe in the end of October Knox was met by letters from them containing the mortifying injunction to proceed no further on his journey. In indignation he wrote to the Nobility of Scotland the shortest but the most dignified and trenchant of all his letters. He resents the personal slight: how should he—being thus rejected—return without shame to the godly and learned men at Geneva by whose advice he had accepted the invitation? Still more keenly he feels the injury done to his people at Geneva. It had been no light matter to him to leave his "small (but to Christ dearly-beloved) flock." Was he to have undergone all his sorrow for a caprice? But his chief concern is the destruction that must fall on the Scottish noblemen themselves, if they thus play fast-and-loose with the salvation, "not of one or two but, as it were, of a whole nation." On them he throws all responsibility. "For only for that cause are ye called princes of the people, and ye receive of your brethren honour, tribute and homage at God's commandment; not by reason of your birth and progeny . . . but by reason of your office and duty, which is to vindicate your subjects and

<sup>1</sup> It is doubtful whether the fourth name on the list is the signature of Lord Erskine or of Erskine of Dun.

brethren from all violence and oppression, to the uttermost of your power." His letter served its purpose ; it stung the prudent deliberation of the Scotch Protestant Lords into resolute and responsible action. On the third of December (1557) the former subscribers, Lorne, Glencairn, Lord James, Erskine of Dun, and Morton drew up a paper binding themselves to defend Christ's cause and to support His ministers, with all their power and even at the risk of their lives. From this first solemn bond or covenant the subscribers received the name of "Lords of the Congregation."

It is noticeable that Knox's letter to these Lords contained no reference to the Regent. His convictions with regard to the authority of princes were growing menacingly revolutionary. Whilst he was at Dieppe came news of a cruel assault on the Protestants in Paris, begun indeed by the mob, but sanctioned and completed by the responsible action of the Government. "In a few words to speak my conscience," he breaks out impatiently, "the regiment of princes is this day come to that heap of iniquity that no godly man can enjoy office or authority under them. And what must follow hereof, either that princes be reformed and be compelled also to reform their wicked laws, or else that all good men depart from their service and company."

In 1558 when Knox was again at Geneva, he wrote another solemn appeal to the whole Nobility of Scotland, urging them to take the control of the spiritual power into their own hands. He warns them that it shall by no means serve them as an excuse to plead that they are bound to obey the Prince. "Your duty," he writes, "is to hear the voice of the Eternal, your God, and unfeignedly to study to follow His precepts." It is

part of the very duty they owe to the king, he tells them, "to correct and repress whatsoever ye know him to attempt expressly repugnant to God's Word . . . or what ye shall espy him to do, be it by ignorance, or be it by malice, against his subjects great or small." Such counsels would be very apt to "cause mischance to many worthy persons," but probably Knox was growing tired of the prudent pusillanimity of his brethren and fathers in the faith. He does not disguise his contempt. "Now the common song of all men is, 'We must obey our kings, be they good or be they bad; for God has so commanded.'" Not content with this appeal to the Nobles of Scotland, Knox, with a courage and originality all his own, appeals to the conscience of the nation as a whole. The simple people, as much as "kings, judges, rulers, and nobles," are, he declares, responsible for the dominant iniquity, as long as they fail to resist it to the utmost. "Beloved brethren, ye are all God's creatures." In this fact lies "the equality which is between kings and subjects, the most rich and noble, and the poorest and men of low estate." And this equality carries equal responsibility. "For the Gospel . . . is the power of God to the salvation of every believer, which to credit and receive, you, the Commonalty, are no less indebted than be your rulers and princes." "If your superiors," he continues in the words as well as the spirit of a revolutionist, "be negligent, or pretend to maintain tyrants in their tyranny, justly ye may provide true teachers for yourselves, ye may maintain and defend them . . . Ye may, moreover, withhold the fruits and profits which your false Bishops and Clergy, most unjustly, receive of you."

After all he was not concerned to establish abstract principles of liberty and equality; it was enough for him that the Gospel was crushed in England and excluded from Scotland by the will of two sovereigns. Now it happened that both these obstructive rulers were women. Catching at the idea that such a rule was an anomaly, Knox had persuaded himself that it was forbidden by the Scriptures.

Some time in the winter of 1557, he had gone privately to consult Calvin on this question. The interview was disappointing. Calvin understood his Bible too well to force such meanings on the text and he was too prudent to wish to apply such ideas to existing politics. "It would not be lawful," he explained to his unwilling disciple, "to unsettle governments which are ordained by the peculiar providence of God." Knox was unconvinced. He went home to study the Scriptures and to twist them, with the perverse logic of prejudice, to fit his own views; to brood on the iniquities of the two Queens; and—in a household of admiring women—to convince himself of the immeasurable superiority of men!

Early in 1558 appeared *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the monstrous Regiment of Women*. Unlike all his other writings it appeared anonymously. Warned perhaps by the dire results to the faithful of his *Admonition* (1554), he feared to bring down disaster on his little flock in Geneva. The argument of this famous pamphlet is singularly inconclusive. Catholicism had unduly and perhaps artificially exalted all women with the Blessed Virgin; the Reformation abased them into their proper position with Eve. In her greatest perfection, woman was made to serve and obey man; after

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the curse pronounced against her, she is to be in "complete bondage to man"; her main duty and privilege is "daily, to humble and subject herself," and "to abhor whatever might exalt her or puff her up with pride." It was quite necessary that such sweeping statements should be clearly supported by the Word. Now, Knox could not ignore the fact that there were certain Scripture precedents distinctly against him. Huldah and Deborah were difficult facts to get over—fortunately so, as it turned out. Knox's evasion of the difficulty can hardly be called successful: he declares these to be miraculous instances on which no general law can be grounded, and expects that this halting argument will "be sufficient for reasonable and moderate spirits." The real interest and value of this remarkable work lies, not in strained arguments against an accidental state of things, but in the revolutionary spirit which glows in its pages. "The sound of our weak trumpet may," he says in the preface, "by the support of some wind (blow it from the south or blow it from the north, it is no matter), come to the ears of the chief offenders. But, whether it do or not, we dare not cease to blow as God will give strength. *For we are debtors to more than to princes, to wit, to the multitude of our brethren.*" Knox is already dreaming of a day of deliverance from secular tyranny: "Let not the faithful, godly, and valiant hearts of Christ's soldiers be utterly discouraged, neither yet let tyrants rejoice." Not by a miracle is this deliverance to be wrought, far less by the passive endurance of a persecuted Church, but by some "noble heart" whom God shall raise up to vindicate the liberty of his country. The *First Blast* was published in the spring of 1558,



and in the following autumn Mary Tudor died, and Elizabeth, the hope and the mainstay of the Protestants, ascended the English throne. This fact is the completest and the most ironical comment upon Knox's arguments against the "Regiment of Women." The echoes of that ill-timed *Blast* were to ring in his ears all his life.

Before Knox finally left Geneva, in the spring of 1559, he had written his one theological work, the *Answer to Blasphemous Cavillations written by an Anabaptist and Adversary to God's Eternal Predestination*. This work is remarkable as being the only writing of Knox's which is entirely unreadable by the ordinary layman. Open the treatise where he will, the argument always appears to him to be at the same point, and that point the lofty and inscrutable commonplace of Calvinism which declares that "God, in His eternal and immutable counsels, hath once appointed and decreed whom He would take to salvation, and whom also He would leave in ruin and perdition."

## CHAPTER VII.

### BEGINNING OF THE CIVIL WAR IN SCOTLAND.

A QUEEN, surrounded by complacent courtiers, is ill fitted for measuring the force of a great popular movement. It is always difficult for a woman to recognize that the facts of life are hostile to her expectations. In the sixteenth century it was impossible for a ruler to believe that his or her authority could be set aside by the will of the people ; nor could a daughter of the great Catholic house of Guise be easily brought to fear that the power of the Church could be seriously menaced by upstart preachers. To these disabilities Mary of Guise added the grave disadvantage of being an alien ruling over a fiercely independent people. Her enemies can hardly deny her capacity as a ruler, but they accuse her truly of governing Scotland in the interests of France. Responsible posts were bestowed on Frenchmen ; her efforts to establish a standing army and to regulate taxation had not only made her rule unpopular, but had thrown suspicion on the French alliance itself. So little did she understand the strength of the religious movement that was every day more markedly dividing the country into two hostile parties, that she tried to heal the breach by favours and banquetings and fair words.

She pursued this policy with both parties all through the year 1558. Her daughter had married the Dauphin in April, but the French Court could not be satisfied unless the crown of Scotland was secured to the French Prince as inalienably as to his wife. To obtain the "Crown Matrimonial" for her son-in-law, the Regent had to use craft with both parties; promising the Churchmen that if this suit were granted her she would put an end to "these heretics and confederates of England"; promising the Protestants that she would gladly consent to reformation in religion if they would support her plea against the Churchmen, the Bishop of St. Andrews, and the house of Hamilton.

The two religious parties were almost evenly balanced in the State, but the Protestants were daily gaining in confidence and popular estimation. There were ominous signs that the common people understood enough of the new doctrines to have a restless and irritated sense that they had been wronged and deceived by the Church. In various places they had seized and destroyed images of the saints; the citizens of Edinburgh had first burnt their patron, St. Giles, and then flung him into the Nor'loch. When his festival recurred on September 1, 1558, the Churchmen had procured a new image, and the Queen Regent herself joined in solemn procession through the town. But when she, as was her frank, affable habit, had gone to dine with one of the citizens, the fierce humour and indignation of the Edinburgh mob burst forth, and a riot beginning with rough laughter, ended with cracked crowns, and Churchmen fleeing for their lives.

Nor was evidence wanting that there were men of skill and conviction directing the irritated feelings of

the populace. On January 1, 1559, there appeared, stuck on gates of all the friars' places, a singular paper purporting to come from "the blind, crooked, beggars, widows, and all other poor," accusing the friars of having "falsely stolen the wealth given by the pious for the service of the poor," and ending with this significant note of menace, "We have thought good therefore to warn you . . . that ye remove forth of our said hospitals betwixt this and the feast of Whitsunday next . . . Certifying you, if ye fail, we will at the said term, in whole number (*with the help of God and assistance of His saints on earth, of whose ready support we doubt not*) enter and take possession of our said patrimony and eject you utterly forth of the same." As it turned out, this threat was literally fulfilled.

On March 2, the Provincial Council of the Church met for the last time in Scotland. Never were men more in earnest to set a house in order that was already tottering to its fall. They had in the preceding November rejected the reasonable terms of the Protestant Lords. But now at the eleventh hour they tried in all haste to carry out internal reforms of such strictness that their only result was to send many waverers into the opposite camp.

It was unfortunate also that the Queen Regent chose this precise moment to depart from the tolerant, non-committal course she had hitherto held in religious questions. Her policy was at all times dictated by the French Court. A peace, known as the Peace of Câteau-Cambrésis (April 2, 1559), had just been concluded between France, England, and Spain. To conciliate the latter power the French Government had determined on strong measures against the Reform-

ation, and the Scottish Regent received orders from her brothers, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, to suppress the Congregation.

In the districts where the Lords of the Congregation were dominant—such as Fife, Angus, Mearns, and the Westland—Protestant ministers had preached openly, hitherto unmolested; suddenly Mary of Guise summoned them to appear before the Council at Stirling, on May 10, 1559. "They shall be banished out of Scotland, albeit they preach as truly as ever did St. Paul," she is reported (but only by Knox) to have exclaimed.

In the beginning of May the Protestant gentlemen of Angus and Mearns and the citizens of Dundee resolved to accompany their preachers before the Council at Stirling. They claimed to come as "peaceable men minding only to give confession with their preachers," and, except Erskine of Dun, they could not boast of men of rank or importance among their numbers. They had however been reinforced by the strongest will, the stoutest voice, and the most passionate heart in Scotland.

On May 2, John Knox arrived in Edinburgh. He had hoped to arrive sooner, but at Dieppe his journey had been stayed. To his unfeigned surprise he learned that his *First Blast* had so inflamed the heart of the English Queen against him, that not only was free passage through England denied him, but the friends who had requested it on his behalf barely escaped imprisonment. The letter he addressed to Cecil on the subject was hardly calculated to mend matters. He reminds the Secretary that his "terrible defection from the truth known" had rendered him "worthy of Hell,"

and enjoins on him to signify to that "infirm vessel," Queen Elizabeth, that only by "humility and dejection of herself before God," can she secure the stability of her throne, "the which I know shall be assaulted more ways than one."

Knox doubtless alluded to the fact that the French Court was slow to acknowledge Elizabeth's right to the English throne, and had encouraged Mary Stuart to assume the arms of England. He had a singular confirmation of these designs against Elizabeth in his voyage from Dieppe to Edinburgh. A fellow-traveller on board showed him, in great secrecy, a staff with the arms of England engraved on it, which he was bringing as a present to the Queen Regent. The fact was carefully noted by Knox and six months later used as an argument to persuade the English Queen that her interests were identical with those of Mary's rebellious subjects.

On his arrival in Edinburgh Knox learned that the brethren were assembled to defend their preachers. "I am come, I praise God," he writes to his favourite correspondent, Mrs. Anna Locke, "even in the brunt of the battle." "If God impede not," he intended to present himself with his fellow-preachers before the Queen and Council; "there, by life, by death, or else by both to glorify His godly name, who thus mercifully hath heard my long cries." He joined the brethren at Dundee, and thence the whole party marched to Perth, where the Protestant interest was strong.

To avoid the suspicion of rebellion, the Protestants decided to send Erskine of Dun to Stirling to negotiate with the Queen. His gentle, conciliatory character made him easy to deal with, easy also to be deceived. Mary was alarmed at the numbers and resolution of the

Protestants. She promised to postpone the summons if they would disperse; but, when the danger seemed past, she adhered to her former policy. On the 10th the preachers were cited, and not appearing, were "put to the horn" (outlawed). The Protestants of Perth had mistrusted her fair speeches; the preachers, at least, were more indignant than surprised when Erskine of Dun returned on the 11th with the full account of her treachery. "Which understood, the multitude were so inflamed that neither could the exhortation of the preachers nor the commandments of the magistrate stay them from destroying the places of idolatry." Such is the description in Knox's *History* of the riot in Perth, where images were broken, churches gutted, and the houses of the Black and Grey Friars plundered and destroyed. This deliberate account was written several months after the event, but there is no mistaking the exultation which throbs through a letter written immediately after the riot to Mrs. Locke. "The brethren sought the next remedy . . . and . . . put-to their hands to reformation in St. Johnstoun, where the places of idolatry . . . were made equal to the ground; all monuments of idolatry that could be apprehended, consumed with fire; and priests commanded, under pain of death, to desist from their blasphemous Mass." After such words from Knox's own pen, it is surely a waste of pious zeal to try to lay the blame of all excesses on the "rascal multitude."

News of these riots fell like a thunderclap on the Court at Stirling; the Churchmen, "rowping like ravens," clamoured for vengeance; the Queen vowed to destroy St. Johnstoun with every man, woman and child in it; the very Lords of the Congregation hung

back, alarmed at the sight of open rebellion. The wealth of the Church, the authority of the Crown, the small but disciplined body of French troops, the strength afforded by the French alliance, all were arrayed against the Protestants at Perth. Knox's courage was always the higher, his voice always sounded the clearer, in moments of public danger or defeat. From the camp at Perth letters were dispatched to the Regent, to the Frenchmen in her service, to the Churchmen, and to the Nobility; every burning line in these breathes the spirit of Knox. The message to Mary is full of menace; so lightly is the awful power of the king regarded in the Councils of Perth, "that it is to be feared that neither her Grace nor yet her posterity shall, after this, find that obedience and faithful service" which till then has been found in the Scottish people. In the short letter to the Frenchmen there is audible the muttering of that suspicion and jealousy, which for the past few years the Scottish people had been transferring from "the auld enemy," England, to the ancient ally, France. The letter to the Churchmen is a sheer declaration of hostility, addressed "to the generation of Antichrist, the pestilent Prelates, and their shavelings in Scotland." But Knox's real message is to the Nobility of Scotland. In his letter to these he is too intent on carrying conviction to indulge in scurrility or violence. From the opponents of the Protestants, men like the Hamiltons and Huntley, he demands that no compliance with the corrupt will of the Sovereign shall persuade them to condemn their countrymen unheard, but that they shall fairly try the lives and doctrines of the Protestants by the Word of God. In a strain of more solemn warning, he addresses those who had once professed Christ, whose names were



appended to the Common Bond of 1557, men like Lord James and Argyle who were hesitating to break with the Court, or like Morton, intent at this crisis, as at every other moment of his evil life, upon his selfish interest. Knox had most emphatically claimed for the Reformed Church the right of excommunication. At this moment, when "Christ's true Kirk" in Scotland was represented by half-a-dozen preachers and their followers, he threatened to use this power against the only men from whom efficient support could be expected. "Unless ye join yourselves with us," he writes, "as of God ye are reputed traitors, so shall ye be excommunicated from our society. The glory of the victory which God shall give to His Church, yea, even in the eyes of men, shall not appertain to you." This letter passed like a fiery cross among the faithful in all parts of the country; when it was read aloud in the church of Craigie in Ayrshire the Earl of Glencairn, moved in heart and conscience, rose up and said, "Let every man serve his conscience. I will, by God's grace, see my brethren in St. Johnstoun; yea, albeit never a man should accompany me, I will go, and if it were but with a pike upon my shoulder; for I had rather die with that company than live after them."

The arrival of a contingent of stout "professors" from Ayrshire under this gallant nobleman strengthened the little company in Perth so mightily that they were able to make terms with the Regent. They consented to leave the town and to disperse to their houses on condition that no one should suffer for the late disturbances, and that all questions of religion should be considered in the next Parliament. Neither side expected nor indeed wished for a permanent peace. The Regent,

convinced that rebellion not religion was aimed at, held herself bound to keep faith with heretics, only as long as it suited her convenience. The preachers openly affirmed that the Queen meant no truth. They advised their hearers to consent to an appointment merely to "stop the mouths of their adversaries," and to "suffer hypocrisy to discover itself."

On May 29, the Queen with her troops marched into Perth. According to the expectations and hopes of the Protestants, she soon broke the terms—at least a child accidentally killed, and the Mass celebrated on a dicing-table in default of an altar, could be thus interpreted. Lord James and the Earl of Argyle—he had been Lord Lorne when he signed the bond in 1557—convinced of the Queen's bad faith, had now no scruples in openly putting themselves at the head of the Protestants. They with their followers withdrew to St. Andrews, and required the other leaders of their party to join them on June 4, "for reformation to be made there." Knox was already busy, "making reformation" in the neighbouring seaports of Crail and Anstruther. After sermon, stout traders and seamen "also put to their hand," and reformed their churches in what a decorous English bishop describes as "a somewhat Scythian manner."

But the goal of Knox's wishes was St. Andrews. He took his own prophecies very seriously. Again and again they supplied motives for their own fulfilment. In the darkest days in the galley he had been assured that he would again preach Christ in that place. His friends doubted the prudence of allowing him to preach on Sunday, June 11. Archbishop Hamilton had arrived in the town the night before with a hundred armed

men, and angrily forbade the outlawed preacher to appear in his pulpit. Knox, who himself loved to make his adversaries ridiculous as well as odious, bitterly resented the mocking message sent by the Bishop to the Lords, "That if they suffered Knox to preach, twelve hackbuts should light upon his nose at once (oh, burning charity of a bloody Bishop!)." Knox knew, and soon the Bishop was forced to recognize, that the hearts of the townspeople were with the Reformers. The Bishop retired in dudgeon to Falkland Palace; and Knox preached on that Sunday and on the three following days, "even amidst the Doctors, who to this day are dumb; even as dumb as their idols who were burned in their presence." For the Reformers, who professed Christ as the beginning and end of their faith, treated the image of the Crucified as if it had been the shameless idol of some pagan cult.

Knox had preached on the cleansing of the Temple, and immediately after, the beautiful cathedral, the monasteries of the Franciscans and Dominicans, and the other sacred buildings which had made St. Andrews the fairest town in Scotland, were "purified." Knox felt neither compunction nor misgiving; his whole heart was filled with solemn triumph. "The long thirst of my wretched heart," he writes, "is satisfied in abundance, . . . for now, forty days and more, hath my God used my tongue in my native country, to the manifestation of His glory. . . The thirst of the poor people, as well as of the Nobility here, is wondrous great, which putteth me in comfort, that Christ Jesus shall triumph for a space here, in the North, and extreme parts of the earth."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CIVIL WAR IN SCOTLAND. (1559—1560.)

ON Monday, June 12, the Queen's forces took up position on Cupar Muir. The army of the Congregation which opposed them was at first a mere handful, but during the night men poured in from the Lothians, from Perth, and from the towns and districts of Fife, "so that it appeared as men had rained from the clouds." On both sides there was an unwillingness to shed blood, most unusual in the Scotland of the sixteenth century, where arms were the only arbiters that commanded any respect. The more sober spirits among the Congregation were still anxious to avoid the reproach of stirring up rebellion; on the side of the Court, parties were divided. The Duke of Chatelherault could not forget that he was next heir to the throne; it was not to his interest to prostrate his own countrymen under the power of France. On their part, the Queen and her French officers were unwilling to proceed to extremities till they felt secure of help from abroad. At the very instant when the two armies were confronting one another, Sir James Melville had arrived at Falkland Palace on an embassy from the French King. Henry II was hardly zealous enough to waste men and treasure

in settling religious difficulties in Scotland, and agreed with his minister, De Montmorency, when he declared, "We must commit Scotsmen's souls unto God, for we have difficulty enough to rule the consciences of Frenchmen."

With so much reluctance on both sides to make an irreparable breach, a battle was avoided and a truce signed for eight days, the Regent consenting to withdraw her troops to Dunbar. The only man among the Protestants who had trained experience in arms was William Kirkcaldy, Laird of Grange, Knox's old comate in the garrison of St. Andrews. He had served in the French army, and was a skilful general as well as a stout and chivalrous soldier. No man recognized more clearly the weakness of the disorganized feudal army of the Congregation, nor was better acquainted with the power France might at any moment put into the field in support of the Regent. On the day after the meeting on Cupar Muir he sought out his old acquaintance, Knox, in St. Andrews. The same idea may have been in both their minds, but it was the preacher (who looked for assured victory from the power of God alone, and by no "arm of flesh") who, "after many words, burst forth: 'If England would foresee their own commodity . . . they would not suffer us to perish in this quarrel.'" It was a thought that had long occupied Knox's mind. "My eye," he wrote to Cecil, "hath long looked to a perpetual concord betwixt these two realms," founded on a common zeal for Christ's cause. It was no mere political alliance that he looked for such as was, later, ardently desired by Lord James and Lethington. To Knox the people were always more important than princes, and the establishment of

Christ's Kingdom of infinitely greater moment than the prosperity of England or Scotland. It was chiefly to further this plan that he had begged leave to pass through England, that there he might "communicate with some man, secret and of solid judgment, such things as gladly I would not commit to paper." But for the obstinate refusal of the English Court to grant him licence, he had intended to visit the North of England where he had influence, to enlist the sympathy of the people for their Scottish brethren. It was his settled belief that "if the hearts of the Borderers of both parts can be united together in God's fear, our victory shall then be easy." Like others of Knox's statesmanlike schemes, the plan of a union between two nations, as distinct from an alliance between two governments, was never carried out. In the meantime the urgent question was how aid in men and treasure might be obtained from the cautious English Government. Knox, knowing himself to be in disfavour with Elizabeth, left Grange to take the initial steps.

Meanwhile the Lords of the Congregation and their following had visited Perth and Stirling, "purifying" and "reforming" wherever they came. On June 29 they arrived in Edinburgh. Here however they found that the populace had so efficiently "reformed" all the religious houses "that they had left nothing but bare walls, yea, not so much as door or window; where through we were the less troubled in putting order to such places." The Regent was at Dunbar and the Congregation took possession of the capital unopposed. But, though they might fill the crowded, narrow town with their men-at-arms, the strength of the place, the fortress, whose cannon commanded the main street, did

not fall into their hands. Lord Erskine the commandant had received his charge from the Parliament, to the Parliament alone would he yield it; through the whole civil war he kept this neutrality, as little moved by his religious sympathies with the Congregation as by the demands of the Regent.

A revolutionary party should never pause in the midst of its success. With inaction, enthusiasm cools and reflection begins. The dread of an uncertain future tends to reconcile men to the old order of things; in such moments the instinct to return to traditional authority is strong in ordinary men. The Congregation lacked a political head whose claim to leadership could not be disputed. Far the ablest man amongst them, Lord James, was from his peculiar position prohibited from taking too prominent a part. Mary of Guise was already spreading rumours that he aimed at nothing less than the Crown; rumours that at least served to keep the jealous and suspicious Duke of Chatellherault some months longer on her side. In these anxious days of inaction, it was the burning enthusiasm and extraordinary influence of Knox and his fellow-preachers that kept the Congregation together and prevented betrayals and defections to the Court party, where all deserters would have been welcomed by the diplomatic Regent. It was their opposition that prevented the Congregation accepting her terms when she seemed to promise "liberty to religion." They "perceived her malicious craft" in these fair promises; but, even if they had believed her sincere, toleration and liberty of conscience were not what they were fighting for. Their object was that "manifest idolatry" should be overthrown and the preaching of the Word and right

administration of the Sacrament should be established. Yet all the zeal and eloquence of the preachers failed to keep the Congregation's army together through the month of July. Against want and poverty they could work no miracles. The Protestant army had been under arms since May and their provisions were exhausted; nor could men be spared from the work of the fields in a country where want trod close upon subsistence.

In the meantime the Regent had everything to gain by the drift of time. Her disciplined French troops were paid by money sent out of France, or by funds bestowed by the Churchmen as insurance against Reformation. An unexpected event had moreover entirely changed her position. The death of the French King, Henry II, on July 10, produced an immediate change of policy. Francis II, a sickly lad of sixteen, was guided in all things by his wife's uncles, the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine. These were committed to a policy of extermination of the Protestants; and their sister could count confidently on help from France in her conflict with the Scottish Nobility.

By the end of July the leaders of the Congregation recognized the impossibility of holding Edinburgh any longer. The town was delivered to the Regent and a truce was concluded. All questions of religion were to be suspended till the next Parliament; in the meantime, the Congregation bound themselves to respect sacred buildings and to leave Churchmen undisturbed in the enjoyment of their property—ungodly compromises which Knox feared would draw down God's judgment on those consenting to them. On July 26 the Con-



gregation, disheartened and anxious, left Edinburgh and withdrew to the West, and the Regent entered the Canongate in triumph, and took up her abode in Holyrood.

The burghers of Edinburgh, the firmest Protestants in the kingdom, had chosen Knox as their minister on July 7. He had however left his congregation when the city surrendered, and had gone with the Lords to Stirling. It was Willock who administered the Lord's Supper to the faithful in St. Giles, while French soldiers showed their contempt by strutting up and down the aisles, talking and laughing. More than once or twice in the life of Knox we find him, in the hour of peril, disappearing with the swiftness of his great prototype, Elijah. In the cause of religion he was no private combatant who might most efficiently do service by heroic death; he was the leader whose hot and passionate faith could animate a nation, and whose strong will and practical genius could hold men together and plan far-reaching schemes. It was for the furthering of one of these schemes that Knox's services were at this crisis absolutely necessary to the Congregation. Unlike all his contemporaries,—with the exception of Lord James and Lethington,—he had complete sympathy with England, and lacked any trace of that irritable patriotism which made the Scotch Nobility suspicious of the “auld enemy,” even when most dependent on her support. It was growing daily clearer to the Congregation that without help from England their cause was hopeless. If Knox's forcible pen and acquaintance with Englishmen pointed him out as spokesman in these negotiations, one insurmountable obstacle stood in his way. That unlucky

*First Blast* had as he complained blown all his English friends from him. Cecil, it is true, habitually denied himself the indulgence of resentments, and for the sake of England in the first place, and Christ's Cause in the second, could overlook much; but Cecil had at his back a woman who, astute politician though she was, never restrained her feminine partialities or prejudices. "Of all other, Knox's name, if it be not Goodman's, is odious here, and therefore I wish no mention of him hither." So Cecil wrote to Sadler, and Cecil knew his mistress.

There was nothing for it but for Knox to explain and apologize with as good a grace as he could bring himself to assume. On July 20 he set himself to the sour task of writing to Elizabeth. To save his self-respect, and to avoid all courtliness, he "discharged his conscience towards her," reminding her how "she had declined from Christ in the day of His battle for fear of her life." As to the main contention, he might protest attachment to Elizabeth's person as much as he liked; that which is "repugnant to nature, contumely to God, and contrarious to His revealed Word," was not changed because the "degenerate woman" who occupied the throne of England, was in a position to favour the cause Knox had at heart. To recant, or own himself mistaken, was impossible to a man who honestly believed himself prompted by the Holy Spirit. In a shuffling and unsatisfactory manner he contrived to shelter himself behind Deborah, and admitted that God had raised up Elizabeth "from the dust, to rule above His people for the comfort of His Kirk." Exhortations to "forget her birth and title," and to consider her "former offences," were not calcu-

lated to conciliate the English Queen. Fortunately for the Protestant cause, Cecil was conspicuous for tact, and Knox's letter was quietly put aside. The same post that carried this ineffectual writing, bore also letters from the Congregation addressed severally to Cecil and to Elizabeth. There is a striking difference in the style of the two missives. That to Cecil is aglow with the sincere religious enthusiasm which at that moment possessed equally rough barbarians like Ruthven, gallant soldiers like Grange, staunch, simple characters like Ochiltree, undistinguished men like Argyle and Boyd, and prudent counsellors and men of the world like Lord James and Glencairn. Cecil was the recognized friend of the Reformation; to his sympathetic ear the Scottish Lords declared that their only purpose was to advance the glory of Jesus Christ, and the true preaching of His Evangel within their country. They proposed to establish a perpetual amity with England "to the praise of God's glory and the comfort of the faithful in both realms;" finally they hinted that they were prepared to adopt "the next remedy," in case the Regent continued to oppose the changes in religion. To Cecil they might exclaim, in all sincerity of fervour, "Now feel we the Heaven rather than the earth;" but men like Glencairn and Lord James knew that a message from "Heaven" would have far less weight with Elizabeth than a simple statement of danger threatening her crown and kingdom. "If in this battle we shall be overthrown," they wrote to the Queen, "we fear that our ruin shall be but the entrance to a greater cruelty." Elizabeth was indifferent to religion, she detested the bald ritual of Calvinism, and resented the republican views of Knox

and his fellow-preachers, but she had perforce to throw in her lot with the Protestants. In France the Guises were already treating Mary Stuart as the rightful Queen of England; in England the Catholics were ready to support a princess of their own faith; Elizabeth was forced to recognize the fact that if a French army were triumphant in Scotland, her crown would not be secure for a day. On the other hand, to break faith with France by openly supporting the Scottish Protestants would precipitate matters and bring about the very danger she feared. She desired to gain time, to negotiate, and finally to give help as sparingly as possible, and above all things with perfect secrecy.

Secrecy being a first consideration, there is an irony in the fact that it was John Knox, the most direct and outspoken of men, who, in the beginning of August, went on an embassy to Elizabeth's representative at Berwick, Sir Harry Percy, Deputy Warden of the Marches. It had first been intended that he should continue his journey as far as Stamford, there to have an interview with Cecil, but it soon became apparent to the English statesmen that he was scarcely fitted for a secret embassy. "Since my departure from Norham there hath arrived at Holy Island Mr. Knox, in such unsecret sort," wrote Sir Harry Percy, "that it is openly known both in England and Scotland; wherefore, I think, he hath not discreetly used his coming." Knox was accompanied by another minister, and Sir James Croft, who, in Sir Harry's absence, was their host, recognizing the impossibility of dealing with such a pair of diplomatists, urged their return home with urbane ingenuity. "I think it not expedient," he said, "that in such rarity of preachers, ye two be any long

time absent from the Lords; " "faithful counsel" which Knox received and acted upon in all simplicity.

If he were no diplomatist, he was the only man in Scotland who could have held the Protestant party together in the weeks that followed. He had to keep the Lords of the Congregation in patience with the English Court whose dilatory policy and shifting promises exasperated the proud Scots, already irritably sensitive to the humiliation of being suppliants to their old enemy. At the same time he had, over and over again, to explain to English statesmen the poverty that prevented the Scots from striking a bolder stroke for themselves. For the Protestant Lords had by no means the support of the whole people. It fell to Knox to instruct public opinion, and to rouse popular antipathy against the Regent and her French allies. In proclamations and appeals Mary of Guise kept laying her case before the world. When, despite the treaty, she fortified Leith, she likened herself "to a small bird which, being pursued, will provide some nest, so her Grace could do no less than provide some sure retreat for herself and her company." It is a pathetic image which loses a little of its force when we learn that "the nest" was guarded by a thousand newly-arrived French soldiers, and that "her Grace" was daily looking for more. In counter proclamations, issued by the Congregation and obviously penned by Knox, appeal is made alike to the national pride and the material interests of the people. They are reminded of the taxes the Regent had levied, the coinage she had debased, the State offices she had bestowed on Frenchmen; and, it is added, if this be not enough, they may find evidence of her "motherly care" in the French soldiers who are

daily coming into the country "to take the barnyards newly-gathered, the granaries replenished, the houses garnished, and by force to put the just possessors and ancient inhabitants therefrom, to shift for themselves in begging . . . they being true Scotsmen, members of our Commonwealth, and our dear brothers and sisters."

If the appeal throughout the proclamation is to patriotism and prejudice, it was because Knox saw clearly that, on the subject of religion, the bulk of the people were still apathetic. They might join in a riot and destroy sacred buildings, actuated by hatred of the Churchmen and love of mischief; they were not prepared to make prolonged sacrifices for a faith they hardly understood. During the months of August and September Knox preached the Gospel unremittingly in all parts of Scotland, travelling without rest from town to town. "I have been in continual travail," he writes to Mrs. Locke, in September, "and, notwithstanding that fevers have vexed me the space of a month, yet have I travelled through the most part of this realm, where . . . men of all sorts and conditions embrace the truth." The manner of his preaching can only be described by his favourite image: "We do nothing but go about Jericho blowing with trumpets as God giveth strength."

## CHAPTER IX.

### END OF THE CIVIL WAR. (1559—1560.)

HARVESTS are never early in Scotland, and in 1559 the season was unusually late; it was October 18 before the scattered army of the Congregation, fresh from the labours of the field, gathered in Edinburgh. Their situation had changed in more than one respect. The Duke had come over to their side bringing the strength of his title and wealth, and the weakness of his wavering purposes. His son, Arran, was a more important ally; the insanity that was to wreck his career was still latent, while his fanatical zeal for the Protestant cause procured him a place in Knox's esteem second only to Lord James. The English Government had so far recognized the Congregation as to send an accredited envoy to them, Mr. Randolph. Not only was the consequence of the Protestant party augmented, their numbers also had increased. This was, however, to prove a source of weakness. "The number is now augmented and their poverty also," Knox wrote sadly to a friend in England. A town like Edinburgh, narrow, walled, and already overcrowded, could not lodge the large body of men that pressed into it, and friction with the populace was constant, and daily grew more

acute. The country round, already swept by the French troops, could not furnish provisions, and food rose at once to famine prices. The mercenary foot-soldiers, sullen and mutinous, clamoured for pay that was not forthcoming. The Duke, the nominal head of the party, never failed to discourage and paralyze any enterprise in which he had a part; there were others equally half-hearted, and it was feared that some whom "money largely offered could not corrupt," would be compelled to remain at home from "extreme poverty." But difficulties and dangers which depressed their comrades only roused a sterner spirit in the real leaders of the party. "I have found in Arran and Lord James more honour, stoutness and courage than in all the rest," wrote Randolph to Cecil. "Whitelaw and Grange," he adds, "are worth three hundred of the rest."

It was characteristic of these men, and still more of the fiery soul of Knox which animated them, that the lower their fortunes sank the more aggressive their actions became. In July they had hinted to Cecil that they might be driven "to take the next remedy"; on October 21 they formally deposed Mary of Guise from being Regent. Kings had, more than once, been removed in Scottish history, but only with violence and by some discontented faction; here it was the Nobility sitting in solemn council who deposed the ruler, after due discussion and with appeals to first principles and Scriptural precedents. True to that reverence for legal forms which was to become a characteristic of later Scottish rebels, they deposed the Regent in the name of their sovereign Lord and Lady. The act is curiously significant of the new spirit which had come into society. It was like a prologue to that drama of



arbitrary government and determined revolution which, three generations later, was to end tragically on the scaffold at Whitehall. At the moment however this audacious act did not materially help the Congregation; the deposed Regent had an army at her back, the deposing nobles were but a company of anxious and penniless men.

Despondency seems at this time to have seized even the indomitable spirit of Knox. There is an anxious urgency in the frequent letters he wrote to Croft and others in England entreating that money may be sent. He fears "lest extreme poverty should compel them (*i. e.* the Protestant Lords) to remain at home, for they are super-expended already;" and he adds warningly: "Ye are not ignorant what poverty on the one hand and money largely offered on the other part is able to persuade." If Mary of Guise was prepared to bribe largely, money flowed but sparingly from Elizabeth's coffers. It needed urgent appeals from her own servants before help was dispatched to the suffering Protestants in Scotland.

In the end of October the superiority in arms of the French troops was clearly shown. Day after day they sallied out of Leith, attacked the Protestant forces, and drove them flying through the Canongate to the very walls of Edinburgh. The assailants grew more daring with each fresh triumph, while disorder and discouragement broke the spirit of the Protestant troops. No one felt these reverses more bitterly than Knox. He had to uphold the courage of the whole company and to endure the gibes of the angry populace; yet, in that moment of stress and strain, he could pause to record the godly death and dying testimony of

a certain Captain Alexander Halyburton, killed in one of these frays. "He confessed that he doubted nothing of God's mercy, purchased to him by the blood of Christ Jesus, neither that it pleased God to make him worthy to shed his blood and spend his life in the defence of so just a cause. And thus, with the dolour of many he ended his dolour, and did enter, we doubt not, into that blessed immortality within two hours after that we were defeated."

Panic had spread through the Protestant ranks. Lord James and Arran offered to remain and hold the town, but they could get no support. In the dark, early morning of November 7, in all haste and secrecy, the Congregation marched out of Edinburgh. At Stirling they drew to a halt, and here the trumpet voice of Knox sounded clear and confident, re-animating hearts heavy with disappointment and the dread of an uncertain future. Though their faces might this day be confounded, he told them, their enemies triumphant and their hearts quaking with fear; if they would but turn unfeignedly to the Eternal, their God ("Who beats down to death to the intent that He may raise up again"), then "their dolours, confusion, and fear should be turned into joy, honour, and boldness."

It was found advisable to divide into two parties; one half of the Protestants remained in the West to stagnate under the infirm command of the Duke, the other made a splendid and desperate defence of Fife under the leadership of Lord James, Arran, and Kirkcaldy of Grange. With these went Knox. He lived at St. Andrews, and was chiefly occupied in writing the *History* of the conflict. He kept a keen and watchful eye on every detail of the fighting. There is a sym-  
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thetic ring of pride in the words with which he describes the courage of those two "young plants," Lord James and Arran, who for a month on end "lay in their clothes, their boots never off, and had skirmishing almost every day, yea, some days from morn till evening." Of his old comrade, Kirkcaldy, he writes in the same spirit, "God is highly to be praised in the prudent boldness and painful diligence of the Laird of Grange." But most touching and most characteristic of Knox is the tenderness which makes him pause in his narrative to note the death of a young "French boy, fervent in religion, and clean of life, whom in despite they (the Regent's soldiers) hanged on a steeple."

Knox was no longer burdened with the task of negotiating with England, work for which he was unfitted. In the end of October, Lethington had openly joined the Protestants, and already in November had been sent to London as the ambassador of the Congregation. No man in Scotland was so well fitted for the difficult part he had to play. A friend of Cecil, a favourite of Elizabeth, a dexterous diplomatist, and a politician of large and enlightened ideas, he had at the same time a proud and sensitive patriotism that made him quick to guard the honour as well as the interests of Scotland. He required all his remarkable qualities to bring his task to a successful issue. Slowly, with many delays and capricious counter-orders, Elizabeth was making up her mind to send material aid to the Scottish Lords. The delay was almost intolerable to the suffering army in Fife. Knox, as the known friend of England, was openly reproached. Men said bitterly to his face, "Support will come from England when we

have no need of it." He withdrew from public life, and in sadness of soul looked back on the days spent in the galley as less painful; "For that torment, for the most part, did touch the body, but this pierces the soul and inward affections. Then was I assuredly persuaded that I should not die till I had preached Christ Jesus, even where I now am. And yet, having now my heart's desire, I am nothing satisfied neither yet rejoice."

Through those winter months the Regent's troops were pressing hard on the small Protestant army. "Where is now John Knox, his God?" Mary of Guise is reported to have said in derision (but only by Knox). "My God is now stronger than his—*yea, even in Fife.*"

On January 4, the French soldiery were within eight miles of St. Andrews. Suddenly a fleet of several sail appeared off the Isle of May. A French fleet under d'Elbeuf was daily expected, and the Regent's forces advanced triumphantly to welcome it, only to learn that it was the long-delayed English ships making for the Firth of Forth. The arrival of these auxiliaries turned the fortune of war, the French withdrew precipitately on Leith, and the Congregation in Fife had a breathing space in which to recover strength.

From this point the conflict takes larger dimensions. The stage is still Scotland, but the key to the position is to be found in Elizabeth's relations to France and other powers. The successful issue of the negotiations between Elizabeth's Government and the Lords of the Congregation, which brought an English army into Scotland in April 1560, was the work of diplomatists like Lethington and Lord James; the surrender of

Leith, after a two months' siege, which broke the power of the Regent's army and drove her French allies out of Scotland, was entirely due to the well-equipped English forces. From Knox's silence on the matter we may conclude that he took no active part in these transactions. It is probable that he was with the Protestant army before Leith during the months of May and June. He relates incidents of the siege that he must have seen as an eye-witness or picked up from the current hearsay of the camp. Where his enemies were concerned Knox had an uncritical greed for gossip. While the tide of fortune was setting against her, Mary of Guise lay dying in the Castle of Edinburgh. The defeated chief of a failing cause, a lonely woman dying in a strange land, she had claims to the forbearance even of an enemy; but when Knox deals with such as he considered "the seed of Antichrist," he knows neither courtesy to women, generosity to a fallen foe, nor simple humanity to the suffering and dying. With unseemly eagerness, he records an idle and malicious tale that from the Castle of Edinburgh the dying Regent gloated over the spectacle of the dead bodies of English soldiers exposed under the walls of Leith—a fact physically impossible at that distance! He exults over her bodily sufferings in words too coarse to be repeated. Yet even the hostile narrative of Knox cannot conceal the gentle magnanimity shown by Mary of Guise on her death-bed. She bade farewell to Lord James, Glencairn, Argyle, and Lord Marischall, and admitted with sad candour that she had been mistaken and misled by evil counsel. She even consented to see the Protestant minister, Willock; an act probably more due to unchanging courtesy than to changing

convictions. Knox ends his account of her death with the fervent ejaculation, "God for His great mercy's sake rid us from the rest of the Guisian blood. Amen. Amen." Hatred to the House of Guise is—not indeed a justification—but an explanation of the bitterness with which he detested and suspected the Regent. The Guises were earning the undying hate of all Protestants. All through the preceding March (1560) at the Pont d'Amboise, Protestants—many of them of distinction—had been drowned, tortured, or executed, while from the palace windows, the Cardinal, the Duke, the poor boy-king, his little brothers and his beautiful young wife Mary of Scotland, had looked down unmoved on their torments. These facts must not be forgotten if we would be fairer to Knox than he is to his enemies.

By the beginning of July Leith had surrendered and Cecil and Wotton on behalf of England, and two plenipotentiaries on the part of France, were in Edinburgh arranging the terms of the peace. It was a curious triangular treaty, in which each country made separate arrangements with the other two.

Cecil, perhaps better than any other man in Europe, knew the real difficulty and importance of the crisis. Never did the balance of power hang more delicately poised. France would never have relinquished her hold on Scotland, the Guises would never have consented to peace with heretics, if the Huguenots in France had not been restless and menacing. Philip of Spain looked on sourly while his *protégée*, Elizabeth, lent her aid to the Scotch Protestants, but jealousy of France and dread of his own subjects in the Low Countries kept him inactive. Elizabeth herself knew

that her Catholic subjects—a large and influential body—disliked the alliance with the Scotch Protestants. Above all other considerations, Cecil felt himself hampered by his Scotch allies. Among the nobles many were half-hearted, distrustful of England, anxious to secure the lands and pensions they possessed in France. On the other hand, the preachers were vehement and extravagant in their demands for religious reform. “Their folly,” Cecil wrote impatiently to Norfolk, “would hazard all.” “Religion is more earnestly received here than at home,” he writes. “Some are so deeply persuaded in this matter as nothing can persuade them that may appear to hinder.” “Lethington,” he adds with relief, “whose capacity is worth six others, helpeth much in this.”

The French deputation, whose object was to estrange the Scots from their allies, conceded frankly all the demands made by the former. They consented that the French troops should evacuate Scotland, and that the fortresses they had occupied should be destroyed. An Act of Oblivion was to cover whatever had been against the Government since March 1558. The Estates were to be convened, the question of religion was to be carefully considered by them in full Council, and the result submitted to the Sovereigns.

On July 8 the peace was concluded, and immediately the French troops began to embark. It was practically the end of the kindly old French alliance that had lasted for centuries. To it Scotland owed most of what was refined in her social life, much that was chivalrous and picturesque in her history. The remembrance of it still stirs a chord of romantic sentiment in Scottish hearts like the echoes of an old song. But to

Knox it was the dominion of Satan that was coming to an end to give place to a godly and perpetual amity with England. In the noble and fervent prayer which he offered in St. Giles' before the assembled Nobility on a solemn day of thanksgiving, he renders special gratitude to God for "our confederates of England," and prays that the two nations may be so closely united in the Holy Spirit "that Satan have never power to set us at variance again." Preachers who pray extempore can hardly forbear at times mixing exhortation of their hearers with invocation of the Almighty; there was a note of warning meant for some present in the earnest petition: "Confound Thou the counsels of them that go about to break that most godly league contracted in Thy Name."



## CHAPTER X.

### THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

THE cause of the Congregation seemed now triumphant. The Catholic Church had apparently collapsed without resistance, but the completeness of the victory showed its insecurity. If the Churchmen seemed to acquiesce in their own destruction, it was because they were confident that the French would return in the name of the lawful Sovereign and reverse whatever changes might have been made in the religion of Scotland. The Lords of the Congregation clearly recognized this danger; they were persuaded by the preachers that one way of preparing for it was to lose no time in establishing the Reformed Church firmly in the country.

Parliament met early in August. It was the largest and most popular assembly that had ever met in Scotland, and was largely composed of the lesser barons or lairds. This class furnished from first to last the most zealous and disinterested supporters of the Reformation. For already among the nobles there were some "who, for worldly respects, abhorred a perfect Reformation." When Knox preached in St. Giles' from the prophet Haggai, vehemently urging the duty and

privilege of rebuilding the Temple of the Lord, Lethington remarked, in his peculiar vein of light mockery, "We must now forget ourselves, and bear the barrow to build the houses of God."

The first act of the Parliament was to request some of the most notable preachers to draw up Articles of Belief for the new Church. This they did in the space of four days. Randolph might well write, in astonishment, "I never heard matters of so great importance neither sooner dispatched nor with better will agreed to." He might have added that never was a Confession of Faith drawn up with greater completeness, distinctness, or a more noble eloquence.

This Confession has been perhaps the most important influence in Scottish history. It passed like iron into the spiritual life of the nation; in times of storm and stress it became a sword in the hands of a determined people; for generations it has been the mould which has shaped powerful intellects and resolute characters; at times also it has been like strong chains binding the souls and intelligences of men. In the form in which it was recast by the Puritan Revolution, it has survived into our own day. If to some it has become as an old weapon unfit for modern warfare, none can, without blindness, cease to wonder at an instrument so admirably tempered, or at the strength of those who wore and wielded it.

This Confession which was so powerful both to quicken and transform the life of the nation, was essentially the work of one mind—that of John Knox. We have seen that he was not a man of original speculation. The definite religious system which the intellect of Calvin had built on the foundations of

Paul and Augustine, had been adopted with passionate conviction by the Scottish Reformer, because, in every respect, it met the requirements of his ardent temperament and practical intellect. His nature abhorred compromise and was incapable of toleration; the system of Calvin swept away, without compunction, the whole authority and experience of the Church—the good with the evil—and took up firm ground on the sole authority of Scripture. Knox was a man whose intuitions were so rapid and penetrating that they seemed to himself to be direct inspirations, and Calvinism taught that of ourselves we are dead, blind, and corrupt, till the Spirit of God “quickeneth that which is dead, removeth the darkness from our minds, and boweth our stubborn hearts to the obedience of His blessed will.” He was a man of strong affections and of bitter animosities, and his experience of life had helped to make him a good hater. Calvinism taught, at least by implication, that those whom God had reprobated man might hate with a godly hatred. Everywhere he had seemed to see evil triumphant and righteousness oppressed; in every country of Europe, as he believed, temporal power was allying itself with moribund spiritual authority to stifle the spirit of truth. The perplexing problem of trying to find God’s eternal justice beneath the iniquities and inequalities of actual life was solved in Calvinism by the dogma that the Glory of God is manifested as clearly in the judgment and perdition of the wicked as in the salvation of the just. But there were also in Knox depths of feeling and a fervid spiritual imagination which were stirred by the central facts of the Christian Creed into utterances of lofty and tender beauty. Where the Confession of Faith

deals with the work of Redemption, the language has the ring of martial music. "And so was born the just seed of David, the angel of the great counsel of God; the very Messiah promised whom we acknowledge and confess Emmanuel. . . It behoved further the Messiah and Redeemer . . . by death to overcome him that was author of death. But because the only Godhead could not suffer death, neither could the only Manhood overcome the same; He joined both together in one person, that the imbecility of the one should suffer and be subject to death, and the infinite and the invincible power of the other . . . should triumph and purchase for us life, liberty, and perpetual victory." There is the same sonorous ring in the Article concerning the Resurrection of Christ: "We undoubtedly believe (that inasmuch as it was impossible that the dolours of death should retain in bondage the Author of life), that our Lord Jesus Christ . . . did rise again for our justification and, destroying him who was the author of death, brought life again to us who were subject to death and to the bondage of the same."

To a man of Knox's invincible vitality, bound and thwarted by the body and, as he constantly laments, subject to many temptations, the vision of the life after death was full of triumphant joy. "The Elect departed are in peace," so runs the Article concerning the Immortality of the Soul, "and rest from their labours; not that they sleep and come to a certain oblivion (as some fantastic heads do affirm), but that they are delivered from all fear, all torment, and all temptation, to which we and all God's elect are subject in this life." Concerning the general resurrection on the last day, the Confession ends with a burst of exulting

faith. "In the general judgment there shall be given to every man and woman resurrection of the flesh; for the sea shall give her dead, the earth those that therein be enclosed; yea, the Eternal, our God, shall stretch out His hand upon the dust, and the dead shall arise incorruptible, and that in the substance of the same flesh that every man now bears, to receive, according to their works, glory or punishment."

If this Confession has a stately rhythm and a nobility of diction lacking in the more formal, scholastic Creeds and Catechisms of the following century, it is perhaps because the first Reformers had still the music of the Church's Latin sounding in their ears.

The same dogmatic certainty that expounds the Divine scheme as it is conceived in the Councils of God, traces its working among the obscurities and perplexities of this life. "From the beginning even to the end of the world, there has been, is, and shall be a Church . . . which Church is Catholic because it contains the Elect of all ages, all realms, nations, and tongues, be they of the Jews, or be they of the Gentiles." This noble breadth of view is, at once and to a modern ear, startlingly modified by the vehement declaration, "We utterly abhor the blasphemy of those that affirm that men who live according to equity and justice, shall be saved what religion soever they have professed." Though this Catholic Church be invisible, "known only to God, Who alone knoweth whom He hath chosen," yet there are signs by which the true Church may be known; the sincere preaching of the Word, the right administration of the Sacraments of Christ Jesus, and lastly, ecclesiastical discipline rightly administered. "And such Churches, we the inhabitants of the realm of Scotland,

professors of Christ Jesus, confess us to have in our cities, towns, and places reformed."

Before it was presented to Parliament, the Confession was revised by Lord James and Lethington, prudent counsellors who mitigated "the austerity of many words and sentences." Knox had originally introduced a chapter on the "Obedience and disobedience due to magistrates," but they, remembering how "disobedience" based on the Word of God might sound in the ears of their despotic and irreligious ally, Queen Elizabeth, expunged the passage as "unfit to be entreated at this time." Knox finds room, however, to suggest his favourite principles in a passage where he grudgingly admits the duty "of loving rulers and obeying their charges," but promptly modifies the admission by the express injunction, "to repress tyranny and save the lives of innocents."

On August 17, 1560, the Confession was presented to Parliament. The preachers were present, "standing on their feet," ready to meet any objection to their Articles. None was made. The three bishops present, St. Andrews, Dunblane, and Dunkeld, kept a prudent silence. They were ecclesiastics, not theologians; it was their policy to save what they could of their vested interests, and to trust to time and to France to restore the Church. Of the temporal lords, Athol, Somerville, and Borthwick had the fine, unreasoning loyalty to dissent on the grounds that they would believe as their fathers had believed. "The rest of the Lords," wrote Randolph, an eye-witness of the scene, "with common consent, and as glad a will as ever I heard men speak, allowed the same." There was nothing in the Confession of Faith to rouse that sinister self-interest which, later

on, was to frustrate the practical work of the Church. It was sincere and passionate enthusiasm that possessed this assembly of grave men. Statesmen, soldiers, self-willed and ignorant noblemen, all equally moved, broke down habitual reticence; some desired rather presently to end their lives than ever to change their faith; many offered to shed their blood in defence of it. "I am the oldest in this company," said Lord Lindsay, "now that it hath pleased God to let me see this day, where so many nobles and others have allowed so worthy a work; I will say with Simeon 'Nunc Dimittis.'"

While men's minds were still in this high-wrought condition, Parliament passed on rapidly to clear the way for the establishment of the Reformed Church. In one day the authority of the Pope was abrogated, penal statutes against heresy done away, the Mass abolished and penalties appointed, both to such as heard and such as celebrated it. In so short a time does prosperity turn the persecuted into the persecuting Church.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE BOOK OF DISCIPLINE AND THE BOOK OF COMMON ORDER.

THE Confession of Faith had, in its noble and sonorous phrases, given utterance alike to the intellectual convictions and to the fervid spiritual life of the Reformation. The next thing to be done was to provide the outward body of a Church, in and through which the new spirit might quicken, transform and purify the life of the whole people. As early as April 1560 (while the fortune of war was yet uncertain) the Lords had appointed a commission to draw up the "Policy and Discipline of the Church." The men chosen for the stupendous task of reconstructing the Church, and welding it firmly into the popular life, were remarkable for eminence and for the variety of their positions and experiences. Knox and Willock were the recognized leaders of the Reformation; Spottiswood was a minister who, for his learning and goodness, was immediately afterwards elected one of the first Superintendents; Dean Winram was a Churchman of such consummate prudence that he retained the office of Sub-Prior of St. Andrews to the very eve of the Reformation, and immediately, on its triumph, was elected Superintendent



of Fife, without any one having, apparently, called his sincerity in question; John Douglas, a man of learning and of gentle but feeble character, was Rector of St. Andrews University; John Row had had a remarkable career, first as a distinguished canonical lawyer at Rome, and since his conversion to the Reformed doctrines as the first teacher of Hebrew in Scotland. The more moderate and conservative of these commissioners, recognizing that "Government once loosed is not easily again fastened," were anxious to avoid unnecessary changes in the outward form of religion. But Knox had seen at Geneva the perfect pattern of a Church. Nothing less austere in discipline and severely pure in doctrine would satisfy him in his own country. He expected in all simplicity that his countrymen, who had fought and suffered for Christ's true Church, would be disinterested in her support, and obedient to her discipline. Archbishop Hamilton who knew the world, at least in its baser aspects, better than Knox, is said to have sent him a message that "he would do well not to shake loose the order and policy received . . . till he was sure of a better to be settled in the place of it." This worldly but substantially sound advice, coming from a suspected quarter, probably only increased Knox's determination to break entirely with the past. The new Church was to rest solely on two foundations, the unquestioned authority of Holy Scripture and the will of the Christian community.

The *Book of Discipline* reads in some respects like a code of laws for an ideal Commonwealth, so liberal, practical, and statesman-like are many of its regulations. In one or two respects only has opposition to the Church of Rome introduced a spirit of narrowness

and contradiction. With a "superstitious avoidance of superstition" it is demanded, for the sake of reserving the purity of the new Church, that all existing religious buildings be utterly abolished, except such as are parish churches or schools. This was one of the few regulations destined to be promptly and effectually carried out. In the following summer Lord James in the North, Arran and Argyle in the West, completed systematically what the blind fanaticism of the "rascal multitude" had begun in the previous year. This dread of the hold that habit has on the minds of the ignorant prompted two of the most repellent regulations of the *Book of Discipline*. Of all the Churches in Christendom the Scottish alone ignored the festivals of the Birth and Resurrection of her Redeemer; and, to avoid all false opinion concerning the state of the soul after death, allowed the Christian dead to be laid in the grave without one word of hope or faith or consolation.

In the beginning of the *Book of Discipline* it is laid down that the main functions of a Church are the true preaching of the Word apart from all tradition, and the sincere and simple administration of the Sacraments. Two of the greatest and most permanent services of the Reformation were the gift to every nation of the Bible in its own tongue, and the restoration of the Eucharist from the elaborate mystery of the Mass to the touching simplicity of the Supper of the Lord. The Scottish Reformers were true to the essential principles of Protestantism when they insisted that the main element in the right celebration of the Sacrament was intelligent understanding of the same on the part of the minister and people. For this end the heads of households were exhorted to cause their servants and children

to be instructed in the faith; and, for the same end, weekly meetings were ordered to be held in the churches for the discussion and expounding of Scripture. But, if men were exhorted in every way to try the grounds of their own faith, it was always with the proviso that the convictions they arrived at were to be in accord with the orthodox teaching of the Church. This condition might have proved even more strangling to free inquiry than the passive obedience exacted by Rome if the spirit inherent in Protestantism had not been stronger than the narrow bonds of its accidental forms.

With regard to the Church services and the times and seasons most convenient for these, the rules are elastic enough. "Every particular church, by their own consent, may appoint their own policy." It is notable that there were daily services in the larger towns, and even in the smaller service was held on one day of the week besides Sunday. Beyond the general injunction "that the Sabbath be straightly kept," there is no emphasis laid on what came to be, in the Scotland of the next two centuries, the most important commandment in the Decalogue. Knox himself wrote letters, made journeys, and even entertained guests of importance on Sunday.

In the early days of the Reformation, when services had been held secretly in noblemen's households and other private places, King Edward's Prayer-Book had been used; as soon as the Reformation was established, the *Book of Common Order*, used by Knox's congregation at Geneva, was substituted. But the use of this book was not distinctly enjoined by the *Book of Discipline*. Knox himself seems never to have been bound by any liturgy; he preferred extempore prayers, into

which he might introduce comments and criticisms on contemporary events. The vigorous individuality of many of his fellow-preachers and their horror of "vain repetitions" seem to have made extempore prayers at least as much the rule in most churches as the use of the appointed Prayer-Book. It would appear that the *Book of Common Order* gradually fell into disuse. It cannot be regretted. The stereotyped prayers of the Church, sounding constantly in men's ears from youth to age, form the religious mood and habit of a people as certainly as creeds and catechisms form their convictions. It was well for the obstinately tenacious and imaginative people of Scotland that their affections and superstitious reverence were exclusively given to the Bible. Though they might perversely choose from its pages the passages they could twist to suit the harsher and darker aspects of their faith, they could not prevent the beauty and dignity and consolation of the Book from passing into the national conscience and imagination. Fortunately the sharp distinction they made between the Word of God and any merely human writing prevented their attaching any superstitious veneration to the *Book of Common Order*. Had they done so, it would but have strengthened all that was gloomy and terrible in their creed. "Heavy souls and comfortless, the humble hearts and consciences, oppressed and laden with the grievous burden of their sins," could hardly find consolation in such abject deprecation of God's wrath as this, "Wherefore, forasmuch as we have felt Thy stripes, we acknowledge that we have justly stirred up Thy displeasure against us, yea, and yet we see Thy hand lifted up to beat us afresh; for the rods and weapons wherewith Thou art accustomed to

execute Thy vengeance, are already in Thine hand ; and the threatenings of Thy wrath, which Thou usest against the wicked sinners, be in full readiness." The overwhelming sense of God's wrath and man's corruption, which monotonously moulds every prayer in the *Book of Common Order*, probably reflects faithfully the general religious mood of the Scottish Reformers. A deep sense of sin is part of the strength and reality of Calvinism ; it came unfortunately to be the preponderating element. Believers clung with passionate devotion to the idea of Christ, but it was Christ the innocent and suffering Victim of man's sin and God's justice, or Christ the Judge in glory coming to take vengeance on His enemies ; there is hardly a suggestion of that Jesus who walked in Galilee, who loved Mary and John, who told men that the Kingdom of God was among them, who bade them to be perfect even as their Father which is in Heaven is perfect. In proof of this, we may look long through Knox's collected writings and find no reference to the sayings of Jesus Christ.

If much is incomprehensible, and even repellent to a modern mind in the religion of Knox and his fellows, in their statesmanlike and liberal scheme of Church polity they have gone far beyond modern practice, nor have modern ideas conceived anything nobler and more practical than their plan which combined a national Church, a national system of education, and a national charge of the poor and the sick.

Though, as a final condition, the Church looked forward to equality among her Ministers, the needs of the times made it necessary to introduce several degrees in the first instance. In 1560 there were at most some score or so of men in Scotland recognized as true and

capable teachers; till the number was increased, it was expedient that the most eminent of these should be placed in the chief centres as Superintendents. These were to travel as missionary preachers through their own districts, and exercise authority over the Ministers within their bounds. Till enough godly and learned men were found to provide Ministers for every parish, the smaller places were to be supplied with "Readers," men capable of reading the Scriptures and the Common Prayers, but not allowed to administer the Sacraments. In the original scheme a fourth order was contemplated, Teachers or Doctors, learned men, whose office should be to teach the faithful in sound doctrine and guard the purity of the Gospel from all heresies and false opinions. A lack of learned men in the beginning, and later of endowments, frustrated the hope of this important class ever becoming part of the Church.

The only "holy orders" recognized in the *Book of Discipline* consisted in the "call" from the congregation, and the admission of the candidate into the Church by the Superintendent, neighbouring Ministers and Elders, after due examination of his life, doctrine, and capacity. Beyond the public expression of approbation, there was to be no ceremony; "imposition of hands" is explicitly rejected, the Reformers preferring to disagree with Apostles rather than to agree with Papists. Besides these clerical orders, Superintendents, Ministers, and Readers, the *Book of Discipline* recognized also the offices of Elders and Deacons, of whom the latter were to have in charge all the financial business of the Church, while the former were to assist the Minister in the administration of Church Discipline. This Discipline, which is perhaps the feature of the Reformed

Church most alien to our modern sympathy, is precisely the point which men like Calvin and Knox especially valued. They were all the more zealous for moral goodness because they emphatically repudiated the merit of "works." They felt that the sins of "professors" brought intolerable scandal on their central dogma of the all-sufficient grace of God.

Three centuries lie between us and the *Book of Discipline*. The biting wit of Burns's satires, and the trivial tyranny and pharisaic harshness of old session books, distort our views of what was probably a strong defence against licentiousness and disorder at a time when law was weak and men's passions ungovernably strong. The sins dealt with by Church censure were not heresies, nor breaches of the ceremonial law, but plain moral offences, drunkenness, fornication, oppression of the poor by exactions, false weights and measures, excess and licentious living. The sword of the Church fell heavily, but it fell slowly and deliberately with many pauses to allow of repentance. All estates within the kingdom were equally subject to this discipline, the ruler as well as the ruled; Ministers, as being "eyes and mouth of the Church," were to be tried with special sharpness. A few years after the establishment of the Reformation, one of the most eminent preachers fell into mortal sin; with grief and shame, but with relentless rigour, the Church subjected the erring brother to Discipline. The whole system was founded on the conviction of the radical corruption of human nature; at each General Assembly Superintendents were subjected to the criticism of the Ministers in their district; Ministers were subject to the censure of their Elders; Elders and Deacons were only elected for one year lest

the temptations of office should prove too much for their integrity.

There were three objects for which the funds of the Church were to provide—(1) stipends for Ministers of all grades, (2) support of the poor, (3) maintenance of schools and colleges. Two reasons are urged for liberal provision to be made for Ministers. It was necessary to attract the best and most learned men into the Church. "It is not to be supposed that every man will dedicate himself and children so to God, and to serve His Church, that they look for no worldly commodity . . . and sorry would we be that poverty should discourage men from study and from following the way of virtue, by the which they might edify the Church and flock of Christ Jesus." Further, if the Ministers were to have sufficient dignity and influence, it was necessary that they should have "neither occasion of solicitude, neither yet of insolency and wantonness." The needs of a Minister were held to include books, and the claims of a simple hospitality; their stipends were calculated to put them on a level with lairds of moderate rental; and, because good men are chiefly distracted from the public service by a natural and laudable anxiety for wife and children, the Church was to provide for these after the Minister's death, taking care that the children received good learning or were started in an honest trade.

The care of the poor is recognized as a distinct duty of the Church, not by the easy and extravagant method of alms-giving, but by regulations which anticipate our modern poor-law. "All must not be suffered to beg that gladly would do so . . . but the stout and strong beggar must be compelled to work, and every person



that may not work must be compelled to return to the place where he or she was born."

But the crowning work of the *Book of Discipline* is the liberal and enlightened scheme for education. The general plea for education is laid down with noble breadth and unhesitating authority. "No father," it is declared, "of what state or condition ever he be, may use his children at his own fantasy, especially in their youth, but all must be compelled to bring up their children in learning and virtue." This compulsion applies to all estates equally. "The rich and potent may not be permitted to suffer their children to spend their youth in vain idleness as heretofore they have done." They must dedicate their sons to the profit of Church and Commonwealth by the proper studies, "and this they must do at their own expense, because they are able." And, that no virtue nor talent may be lost to the State for lack of nurture, poor children are to be kept at school at the charge of the Church till it be seen "if the spirit of docility be found in them." All, rich and poor alike, that are found apt to learn are to "be charged to continue their study so that the Commonwealth may have some comfort of them." Even more than the State, the Church is interested "in the virtuous and godly upbringing of the youth of this realm," seeing that she must, in the time coming, be served by their labour and learning. Nothing can be more practical and complete than the scheme of national education. In remote "upland" places, the Minister or Reader is to take care that the children learn their rudiments, and are instructed in the catechism. In towns a school-master, able to teach grammar and the Latin tongue, is to be attached to every church ;

every large town is to have a college—what we should call a secondary school—where the “Arts, at least Logic and Rhetoric and the Tongues,” may be taught by approved masters, “for whom honest stipends must be appointed.” All education is to lead up to and be completed by the University. There, after a liberal training in “the Arts, Tongues, and Philosophy,” each youth must study the subjects “in which he intends chiefly to travail for the profit of the Commonwealth.”

Large and enlightened as the scheme appears, even in our own days of popular education, it would, if it had been carried out, have found the people of Scotland ready and eager to accept it. This proud and ambitious race had always had zeal for education and respect for learning. Schools and school-masters appear in Acts of Parliament from very early times. The compulsory clause in Knox’s scheme is anticipated by the famous Act of 1496, which enjoins on barons and freeholders “to put their eldest sons to the schools from they be eight or ten till they be competently founded and have perfect Latin, and thereafter to remain three years at the schools of Art and Jure, so that they may have knowledge and understanding of the laws.”

If this threefold scheme of national civilization required large endowments, the patrimony of the Church was ample enough to meet all demands. Some writers compute it as half the whole wealth of the country, others as one-third. But Knox was sanguine indeed when he expected that the wealth which had kept the old Church in idleness and luxury was to be handed over to keep the new in learning and holiness. Even if the Church’s wealth had still been unappropriated, it is certain that the greedy and poverty-stricken

Nobility would have secured their own share before considering the claims of religion. As it was, much of the property had already passed into the hands of laymen. Some had been frankly confiscated during the civil war. Some of the larger benefices had been held "in commendam" for young laymen, who adopted the new faith but never renounced the profits of their benefices. Lord James, for instance, enjoyed the rents of Pittenweem and St. Andrews to the day of his death without a shadow of compunction. Much Church property had passed into lay hands through the system of feuing out tithes and letting Church lands on long leases. When the civil war broke out, Churchmen, afraid of losing all, had made over rents and tithes to friends or kinsfolk, making what terms they could. Many of these present holders were Protestants and, with indignation, the Reformers saw them intent on making the most of their bargains, and pressing the tenants as cruelly as ever their old masters had done. "Ye must have compassion upon your brethren," runs a noble passage in the *Book of Discipline*, "appointing them such reasonable teinds that they may feel some benefit of Jesus Christ, now preached to them." But, though it was a grievance that the labourer of the earth should be taxed, not to maintain the Church, but "to feed delicately the idle belly of some priest's pensioner," there was to be no violent confiscation; those who had disbursed money were to receive just compensation.

The *Book of Discipline* had to be examined by the Lords of the Articles, the twelve peers appointed to govern in the Queen's absence; they were precisely the men who had secured most of the spoil for themselves or their friends. The Reformers, with their wonted

fearlessness, ended the book with the solemn warning, that if blind affection moved them to prefer the profit of their carnal friends to the freedom of God's oppressed Church, sharp and sudden punishment would fall on them, "and the glory and honour of this enterprise will be reserved for others."

In January 1561 the book was submitted to the Council. It was not generally approved. Lethington with his sharp wit summed up the feelings of his less articulate fellows when he dismissed as "devout imagination," one of the noblest schemes ever devised for civilizing and educating a nation. Of all the noblemen and lairds present, Lord Erskine alone had the honesty to refuse to sign what would have condemned his large appropriation of Church lands; the rest signed readily enough, however much certain regulations "repugned to their corrupt affections."

## CHAPTER XII.

### RETURN OF MARY STUART. (1561.)

AT once sobered and exalted by the momentous changes that had passed over the Church and State, the Scottish people preserved a most unusual order and stability under the provisional government of the Lords of the Articles. "It passes the judgment of all men of experience . . ." writes Lord James, "and is reckoned a manifest miracle of God." Even the more sceptical Lethington was at a loss to find a reason for the extraordinary quietness of the realm, "but only that it hath pleased the goodness of God to give this glory to His Truth preached among us."

While the vengeance that might at any moment fall on them from France still tarried, the Scottish noblemen attempted to ally themselves still more closely with England. In October 1560 an embassy was sent to Elizabeth to urge her to marry Arran. If he were not a king he was the next in place, and, they assured her, would have the whole force and friendship of the kingdom at his back. Mary Stuart and her claims were strangely ignored in this proposal, which however so flattered the national vanity of the Scots that Lethington was bold to declare, "There is a general consent

amongst the whole nation, the very Papists can be content, for the accomplishment thereof, to renounce their great god, the Pope." While Elizabeth hesitated or affected to hesitate, an event occurred which changed the whole fate of Europe.

John Knox had correspondents in all the Protestant Churches in France, and even at the Court. Early in December 1560 a ship arriving in Leith brought him the news that Francis, the young French King, was mortally sick. That same afternoon he sought out the Duke at his lodgings in the ruinous Kirk-of-Field, and, as it happened, found Lord James in his company. While Knox announced his great news, a messenger, arriving post-haste from England, brought further tidings of the death of the French King. If this news removed the imminent danger of conflict with France, it also opened up new difficulties. But to Knox the death or downfall of his enemies was always a "joyful deliverance sent by the hand of God." Of the painful death of young Francis he writes with savage satisfaction: "For, unhappy Francis suddenly perished of a rotten ear . . . that deaf ear that never could hear the truth of God."

And yet at that very moment Knox's private sorrow might have softened his heart and tempered his tongue, even in recording the death of the reprobate. His young wife had just died, and, in the midst of his cares for the Commonwealth, he mentions the fact in a sad, abrupt little parenthesis: "They three were familiarly communing together, he upon the one part comforting them, and they upon the other part comforting him (for he was in no small heaviness by reason of the late death of his dear bedfellow, Marjorie Bowes)." With

a similar pathetic brevity Ezekiel has recorded the death of his wife : " Also the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, ' Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke : yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.' . . . So I spake unto the people in the morning : and at even my wife died."

Very little is known of Marjorie Bowes' married life. Scanty references in her husband's letters suggest that there was much hard work and little ease or cheerfulness in the young wife's lot. Knox calls her his " left hand," and employed her constantly as his secretary. Some of the endless letters resolving the doubts of his " sisters in Christ " are in her clear, fine handwriting. Sometimes, when she was overworked, these precious answers were mislaid. " She cannot find my first extract," Knox wrote apologetically, " but the rest of my wife has been so unrestful since her arriving here, that scarcely could she tell upon the morrow what she wrote at night." Calvin, in his conventional Latin, writes of her as "*dilectissima uxor*," so she probably fulfilled his requirements in a wife, and had " good humour, chastity, thrift, patience, and solicitude for her husband's health." She left Knox with two young children, Nathaniel and Ebenezer; and a year later her mother Mrs. Bowes came to live in Knox's house in the Netherbow, to be a " relief to him in the burden of the household," and a burden to him in the relief of her conscience.

In January 1561 the ambassadors returned from London, bringing Elizabeth's answer that she " would not marry hastily, and so willed the Council of Scotland and the Earl of Arran not to depend on any hope thereof." It was a rebuff to the national vanity; at

least the noblemen chose to receive it as such. It gave those on whom the English alliance sat uneasily an excuse for turning their wishes and devotion in the direction of their own Queen, whose favour it was important to conciliate. Arran had not even waited for Elizabeth's reply; he was already urging his suit with Mary. And the confidant of this indecently hasty proposal was, of all men, Knox! "My Lord Arran writeth also to the Connetable," wrote Randolph alluding to this matter. "Of all these matters there is no man privy but Knox."

Mary—the widow of a month's standing—sent no encouraging reply to her inopportune suitor. Thrown by the death of her husband from one of the proudest positions in Europe to the premature obscurity of a Dowager Queen, her ambition was set "on the continuation of her honour," and on marriage with "one who may uphold her to be great." She was the most important member of the most ambitious family in Europe. The Guises were stout soldiers of France, and faithful servants of Rome, but their staunchest loyalty was devotion to the House of Guise, their sincerest religion faith in the family fortune. The ambition of this powerful and curiously united family centred, at this period, in their young kinswoman, the Queen of Scots. It was a century which had seen the face of Europe changed by fortunate marriages, and with her beauty, wit, and singular fascination, Mary might aspire to any alliance. She was, besides, not merely a reigning sovereign in her own right, she was next heir to the throne of England. To secure the recognition of this claim, and on the strength of it to ally herself with one of the great Catholic dynasties, was the end



of all Mary's thoughts from the moment of her husband's death. In the great game which the Guises were playing for predominance in the politics of Europe, this girl of nineteen was no mere card in the hands of practised players, she was herself an eager and skilful partner. Under a hundred aspects, gay, pensive, spirited, or gracious, she could cover a settled purpose with a deep dissimulation. She used her personal fascination with feminine adroitness in the game of diplomacy, but she could also flash into sudden decision with the vigour and persistence of a man. Her uncles had freely admitted her into their councils; the Cardinal discussed in her presence questions of politics and religion. She was familiar with the controversial commonplaces of Catholic theology; Calvin's and Luther's writings were certainly among her books, and she knew at least some of the stock arguments used to refute them. What her uncles could not teach her, and what it was fatal to her to ignore, was the strength and reality of the new religious spirit. She expressed her serene and simple conviction when she said to the English ambassador Throgmorton: "God doth command subjects to be obedient to their princes, and commands princes to read His Law and govern thereby themselves and the people committed to their charge." She had heard of Knox and was fully persuaded that he was the most dangerous of her enemies, declaring hotly to Throgmorton that she would either banish him from her kingdom or refuse to dwell there herself. She sent a copy of the *First Blast* to Elizabeth, as if to make common cause with a sister-queen equally outraged in her prerogative. It is amusing and curiously illustrative of her anomalous position, to find Knox adopting the

same attitude of partnership with the English Queen. He tells her that the Queen of Scots is going to have the *First Blast* refuted, and, "though he will not prescribe unto her Majesty what is to be done," he adds the warning that "she (*i. e.* Mary) would not take such pains, unless her crafty counsel in so doing shot at a further mark." Elizabeth's counsellors at least recognized Knox's importance as an ally. Throgmorton likened Mary's attempt to "make him odious" to Elizabeth to the efforts of Philip of Macedon to discredit Demosthenes with the Athenians.

In the meantime in Scotland, Knox and the other "people committed to her charge" were debating whether Mary might be allowed to have her private Mass in her own kingdom. Nowhere in Europe could Catholic Mass and Protestant Sermon exist side by side. Knox foresaw intolerable evils in any exception being made for Mary, and plainly warned Lord James that if "he condescended that she should have Mass either publicly or privately within the realm of Scotland, that then betrayed he the cause of God." "That she should have the Mass publicly," replied Lord James, "*that* I will never consent to, but to have it secretly in her chamber, who can stop her?" He, as her nearest kinsman, had been appointed to go to the Queen in France. The day before he arrived at the little town in Champagne, where he was to meet her, Leslie a Scottish Catholic Bishop (afterwards so closely associated with Mary) brought her secret messages from the Catholic noblemen and prelates in Scotland, offering, if she would trust herself to them and land at Aberdeen, to put 20,000 men into the field and to march against her enemies. Mary knew that so rash a policy would

destroy for ever her chance of the English succession, and gratefully refused this offer. She received her brother with that cordiality which she knew so well how to make special and flattering. He might refuse indeed with emphasis, the Church preferments lavishly promised if he would renounce his religious opinions, but she succeeded in shaking his devotion to Elizabeth. He might still aim at a union with England, but it was no longer through the marriage of the English Queen with the contingent heir of the Scottish throne, but through her recognition of Mary as her successor. Elizabeth might well feel indignant at the fickleness and ingratitude of the Scots, when the most reasonable and responsible of them faltered in fulfilling his engagement.

On August 19, 1561, Mary landed at Leith in a dense chill fog. With that superstitious looking for signs so characteristic of him, Knox records that "the very face of Heaven the time of her arrival did manifestly speak what comfort was brought into this country with her—to wit, sorrow, dolour, darkness, and all impiety." Had she been so inclined, Mary might have seen worse omens in the fact that, arriving unexpectedly, no preparations were made to receive her, and that Holyrood—bald and meagre at best compared to French palaces—was but half furnished. But she was in no mood for fault-finding. It was not only her policy to be pleased, it was part of her superb vitality that she could adapt herself to all circumstances and find pleasure in doing so. If she missed the refinement and brilliance of the French Court, she "delighted above all things to hear of brave deeds," and could take pleasure in the strength and courage of her Scottish Nobility. She said

once that she longed to know "what a life that was to lie in the fields and walk on the causeway with a Glasgow buckler and broadsword."

At once on her arrival she set herself to the congenial task of winning all hearts. With the people she had the frank, affable manner that had gained for her father his title of "King of the Commons." Grave lords were won when this girl of nineteen could sit morning after morning in the council chamber attentive to matters of State, her beautiful hands occupied with some feminine task. She could at will surround her brilliant personality with a gentle pathos as irresistible as was the effect of her bright beauty in the widow's dress she wore at times. "Our Queen weareth the dule (weeds), but she can dance daily, dule and all," is Knox's sour comment. It was her fixed policy to conciliate the Protestant Lords and induce them to support her in refusing to ratify the Treaty of Leith. She flattered Lord James by submitting in all things to his judgment, and gratified him by substantial grants of lands. Lethington knew himself to be suspected by the Queen as "the best Englishman of them all," but, as soon as they met, her confiding frankness won him completely to her service. Glencairn was the staunchest of Protestants, yet it passed current "that nothing he said ever came amiss to her." Randolph was a prejudiced observer, but her courtesy and apparent frankness won him over to believe that she really meant well to his mistress.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### KNOX'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH MARY.

THE first week after her arrival Mary put in jeopardy her newly-won popularity. On Sunday August 24, Mass was celebrated in the Abbey of Holyrood. There was instant outcry among the extreme Protestants about the Court, "Lord Lindsay and the gentlemen of Fife crying plainly in the close, 'The idolater priest shall die the death!'" Panic seized the French attendants; but for the interposition of Mary's three half-brothers, her Mass must have been stopped. Lord James ("the man whom all the godly did most reverence") himself kept the door, while Lord John and Lord Robert between them guarded the priest back to his chamber. In the afternoon great companies repaired to the Abbey to signify that they would not suffer the land to be polluted with idolatry. It was the first time Mary heard the angry mutterings of that fierce Edinburgh mob, which was to play the part of ominous chorus in all the most tragic moments of her stormy years in Scotland. Thanks to her own tact, and the moderation of her counsellors, on this occasion all danger of conflict was tided over. During the ensuing week eminent Protestants flocked to Edinburgh to utter an indignant protest, but only to prove that the atmo-

sphere of the Court was like "some enchantment whereby men were bewitched." "I have been here five weeks," wrote Campbell of Kinyeandcleuch, whose own virtue was untouched, to Lord Ochiltree, "and at first I heard every man say, 'Let us hang the priest,' but after they had been twice or thrice at the Abbey, all that fervency was past." "There is not one who doth absent himself," wrote Randolph, " . . . saving John Knox that thundereth out of the pulpit." All through the week Knox had seen the defection of the godly; on Sunday he spoke out of the bitterness of his soul, saying, "that one Mass was more fearful to him than if ten thousand armed enemies were landed in any part of the realm of purpose to suppress the whole religion." With the instincts of a high-spirited woman, Mary recognized in Knox her one implacable foe, and determined to meet him without delay. On the Tuesday after his sermon he was summoned to Holyrood. Mary received him in the council chamber. Lord James was in attendance, but took no part in the interview; two waiting-women stood at the far end of the room. Mary Stuart and John Knox stood face to face, two of the most remarkable figures of any time or country. She was at the height of her glorious beauty; the fine, liberal outlines of her features were softened and rounded by youth and health, while strong vitality and a sense of power gave the sparkle and fascination that no painter could reproduce. She saw before her a man already old, below middle height, but broad and well-made; a long black beard, already grizzled, shaded the lower part of the dark face, while deep-set grey eyes looked out keenly from under the narrow but prominent brow. Both were accustomed to read the characters of men quickly

and keenly. In the beautiful girl opposite him Knox recognized the power of a practised diplomatist. "In communicating with her," he wrote to Cecil, "I espied such craft as I have not found in such age." In the grave, worn preacher Mary found an unhesitating authority and a disregard alike of her womanly charms and her royal prerogative that for the moment almost disconcerted her. If she failed to measure fully the power of her opponent, it was because that spiritual life from which it was drawn was blank and meaningless to her. She met him with reproaches; he had written a book denying her lawful authority; he had incited her subjects against her; he had stirred up sedition in England. He had his answers ready. As for his book against the rule of women, he was prepared to defend his doctrine but not to act on it. He was "as content to live under her Grace as was Paul to live under Nero." Where she accused him of stirring up sedition in England, he could assure her that the fruits of his labour had been peace and order. But these matters were beside the mark Mary aimed at. She made now a direct accusation. "Ye have taught the people to receive another religion than princes can allow, nor can that doctrine be of God, seeing God commands subjects to obey their princes." To Mary nations were but "subjects," counters in the great political game princes played with one another; to Knox, princes were as other men, except that they had often a more formidable power of obstructing the word of God. "Princes," he replied austerely, "were often the most ignorant of God's true religion." As for the obedience of subjects, it extends no further than the law of God allows. Children are not bound to obey a father seized with

madness, but may bind and restrain him ; not otherwise is the duty of subjects to princes who in their blind wrath would destroy the children of God. Three centuries of revolution and of constitutional government have made these commonplaces ; to Mary they were incredible. " At these words, the Queen stood, as it were, amazed for a quarter of an hour." At length she spoke, and, in her angry surprise, hit very near the mark. " Well, then, I perceive that my subjects shall obey *you* and not *me*."

" Let both princes and subjects obey God . . . and this subjection, Madame, unto God and unto His troubled Church, is the greatest dignity that flesh can get upon earth."

But it was another Church, Mary objected, that she was willing to obey. " Ye interpret the Scripture in one manner, and they (the Church of Rome) in another ; whom shall I believe ?" she asked, astutely hitting a weak point in the pretensions of the Reformed Church.

" Ye shall believe God that plainly speaketh in His Word," answered Knox.

Mary, who had never " laid her faith to the square-rule of God's Word," had no patience to listen while Knox expounded how plainly the Scriptures condemned the Mass. " Ye are too hard for me," she broke in, " but if *they* were here that I have heard, *they* would answer you."

Throughout the interview Knox had been severely plain-spoken, but he had not been churlish. Taking his leave, he said, " I pray God, Madame, that ye may be as blessed within the Commonwealth of Scotland (if it be the pleasure of God) as ever Deborah was in the Commonwealth of Israel." But in his heart he had little



doubt what "the pleasure of God" with Mary would be. "If there be not in her a proud mind, a crafty wit, and an indurate heart against God and His truth, my judgment faileth me."

Afterwards, when the troubles he had foreseen came upon the country, Knox accused himself bitterly that he had not been more "vehement and upright" against "that idol—the Mass." Had he willed it he might have plunged the country into civil war. "God had given me credit with many who would have put in execution God's judgments if I would only have consented." At the time however his practical sagacity saved him from so fatal a course. A following he would have had among the burghers and smaller lairds, but the men of leading would have been united against him. Arrau alone, moody and disappointed, would have been on his side, and to have fought for the Hamiltons would have degraded his party to a faction. Knox wisely, if unwillingly, refused to sanction violence. The pulpit however remained to him. "Where your Honour exhorteth us to stoutness," Randolph wrote to Cecil, "I assure you that the voice of one man is able in an hour to put more life in us than six hundred trumpets continually blustering in our ears." Public opinion obliged even Papists like Huntley to be present at the sermon. He might gloom and pull his bonnet over his brows and mutter beneath his breath, "When will the knaves have railed their fill?" he was constrained to sit still and hear vengeance denounced against his blasphemy. Men's sins and shortcomings were rebuked under the thinnest disguise of Biblical examples; public events, tidings out of France and England, gossip of the Court, were all subjected to searching criticism and fiery de-

nunciations. The very prayers partook of the nature of manifestoes. With "piercing" earnestness, Knox would pray for continuance of the friendship with England; his prayer for the Queen was almost an incitement to sedition. "O Lord, if Thy pleasure be, purge the heart of the Queen's Majesty from the venom of idolatry and deliver her from the bondage and thralldom of Satan, wherein she has been brought up and yet remains . . . that this poor realm may also escape that plague and vengeance which inevitably follows idolatry."

In the following spring (1562) Knox was again summoned to Holyrood, to answer for a sermon in which "he inveighed sore against the Queen's dancing and little exercise of herself in godliness and virtue."

During the preceding week Knox had received news out of France (where the religious wars had again broken out) of an encounter between the Protestants and the followers of the Duke of Guise, in which the latter had massacred women, children, and unarmed men. The night the news reached Edinburgh Mary gave a ball in Holyrood and dancing was prolonged unusually late. It may have been accidental, but Knox was convinced that it was meant to celebrate a triumph over the godly. Next Sunday he was vehement against "the ignorance, the vanity, and the despite of princes." Mary was not alone at this interview as at the last. She received Knox in her bedroom in company with her ladies, Lord James, Morton, and Lethington. In answer to the accusation that he had tried to excite hatred and contempt of the Queen in her people, he replied by giving the substance of his sermon. Without softening word or phrase, he assured the Queen that they who dance immoderately or as a sign of triumph

over the godly will assuredly "receive the reward of dancers, and that will be drink in Hell; unless they speedily repent." It was Mary's policy to conciliate Knox. "Your words are sharp enough as ye have spoken them," she said, and added, with what seemed a noble candour, "My uncles and ye are not of one religion, therefore 'I cannot blame you if you have no good opinion of them. But if you hear anything of myself that mislikes you, come to myself and tell me and I shall hear you.'" It was a generous condescension calculated to disarm the suspicions of the preacher. It offered him a position of influence, it flattered his zeal with the hope of making a convert of the Queen. Knox was proud, arrogant, eager for power, but he was too clear-sighted to be easily flattered. The condescension of princes had no power to move one who held his commission directly from Almighty God. "I am called, Madame, to a public function within the Church . . . I am not appointed to come to every man in particular and show him his offence." The office Mary had offered him savoured too much of the private director. He was too constantly occupied with his books, he added, with a shadow of grave mockery, to have leisure to hang about the Court, and to "whisper his mind into her Grace's ear, or bear the tales of what men said of her." Amazed, hurt, and angry at such a reception of her studied gentleness, Mary turned her back and the interview was ended. Knox left her presence with a "reasonable merry countenance." To those who wondered at his boldness he answered, "Why should the pleasing face of a gentlewoman affray me? I have looked in the faces of many angry men, and yet have not been afraid beyond measure."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### LIFE IN THE NETHERBOW.

WRITING to Cecil after his first interview with Mary, Knox had said, "Since then hath the Court been dead to me and I to it." To Knox "being dead" to anything meant simply inability to control it after his own will. To possess his soul in patience, to retire into the seclusion of prayer and study, was to him sheer impossibility.

Those whom we recognize as saints differ from other zealous and righteous men in virtue of a certain spiritual aloofness. They may associate with the vilest, loving them with a pure passion unknown to other men; they may wear out heart and brain contending with triumphant worldliness, but they keep their souls anchored in the Eternal Calm, and thus escape the deadliest danger of the conflict, the temptation to use in God's quarrel weapons forged by craft or violence. Knox was no saint—he was a passionately earnest man possessed by definite spiritual convictions and holding a lofty and rigid ideal of conduct. To move hot hearts and stubborn wills, to strike hard blows in the cause of religion had not been difficult; to make the Scotsmen of the sixteenth century a whit less violent, less greedy,

less self-indulgent was a task in which he only did not entirely fail. He was not content simply to try and reach men's consciences by the spoken word ; even the discipline of the Church, minute and searching as that was, did not satisfy his passion for mending what was amiss. Imperiously, without misgiving, he intermeddled in men's lives ; seldom unwisely, never except in what he held to be the interests of truth and righteousness. But a spiritual guide interfering actively in the affairs of men must needs at times compromise his sacred character. Knox did not come unscathed out of the ordeal. Once and again he committed himself to extreme positions from which he refused to retreat ; he mistook his own prejudices and irritation for zeal against evil-doers ; to attain righteous ends he allied himself with men whose characters and methods were strangely at variance with his religion. He poured forth unmeasured denunciations, and yet resented any criticism of the preachers as blasphemy against God in His messengers ; worst point of all, his whole credit as a prophet was involved in proving his case against those he had denounced as "reprobate," and he became credulous of scandals and greedy for evidence of their "indurate hearts against God."

With this intense interest in personal matters Knox was living in the heart of a capital, the smallest, the most crowded, the most turbulent in Europe. One long mile of street running along a narrow slope comprised the town. At one end, on the height, in the most commanding position, was the Castle with its guns and garrison ; at the other extreme lay Holyrood in its meadows ; midway, the gate of the Netherbow cut off the Canongate from the City of Edinburgh. There,

probably in a wynd back from the street, was the dwelling which the Town Council of Edinburgh had taken and fitted up as a manse for Knox; a few hundred yards higher up the slope was the Church of St. Giles. Much of the life of the City was passed in the streets; the traffickings and marketings of the citizens, the brawls of the craftsmen, the fiercer quarrels among the armed retainers of noblemen, constantly brought eager eyes and ears to the many windows and balconies of the tall, dark houses on either side. No great state or ceremonial separated the Court from the City. The townspeople were familiar with the figure of Mary, as she passed on foot to dine or sup with the richer burghers, or, in transparent disguise, pursued some frolic with Darnley, in the first days of courtship. What was done at Holyrood over-night was the talk of the causeway next morning, and probably the subject of sermon on the Sunday following. Great nobles would quarrel at Court, and in the dead of night the tramp of armed men in the street would startle agitated burghers from their sleep. A centre for all this eager, contentious life was the little, warm study lined with "deals" (deal panelling), which the kindly Town Councillors had provided for their Minister's comfort. Thither many and various men, on many and various errands, resorted daily. Did a wife desert her austere Protestant husband, straightway must the afflicted burgess call in Knox and his fellow-Superintendents to write a circular to the English Bishops demanding their help in reclaiming the runaway. Now it is craftsmen who have had a difference with the magistrates, who come to Knox to demand his intervention; now it is the Duke and the English ambassador who meet in

his house at supper to discuss affairs of State. The strangest of all among the varied guests was the Earl of Bothwell, who came some time in March 1562 to beg Knox's good offices in reconciling him to the Earl of Arran. Knox was recognized as an arbitrator of quarrels, and, to his honour be it recorded, a peacemaker. His gravely courteous and dignified speech to Bothwell is noteworthy as containing his one allusion to his birth and parentage. It is also the only place where he recognizes human ties other than that "fellowship in Christ," which may be the coldest or the closest of bonds. "For albeit," he began, "to this hour it hath not chanced me to speak with your Lordship face to face, yet have I borne a good mind to your house, and have been sorry from my heart of the troubles I have heard you to be involved in. For, my Lord, my grandfather, goodsire, and father have served your Lordship's predecessors, and this is a part of the obligations of our Scottish kindness; but that is not the chief——" And with the last words Knox resumes the minister, gravely calls on the Earl to repent, and offers the required service. The reconciliation was completed, but the end was disastrous, and caused Knox grief and mortification. The following Friday after the sermon, Arran appeared in Knox's room in great agitation, accusing Bothwell incoherently of trying to involve him in a plot to murder Lord James and carry off Mary. Wild as the project was, it was not incredible. Arran had been suspected of such an attempt a month or two before; Bothwell was later to carry out something very like it. Knox, with quick, quiet observation, recognized that Arran was out of his mind; his timely warning sent to Lord James may

have saved Mary at least one act of violence. Arran, the next heir to the crown, the suitor of two Queens, passes thus tragically from the stage.

During the first year of Mary's reign the whole weight of government rested on her brother, Lord James, and on Secretary Lethington; not without grudging and jealous criticism of many, especially among the godly. They imagined that Lord James was "growing cold" and "seeking too much his own advancement," and that Lethington was ambitious and "too politic." Knox had always distrusted Lethington; at this time he was also disappointed with Lord James. He could not understand his "yielding to Mary's appetite," and blamed him for much that had happened. But if Knox loved any man it was James Stuart, of whom he writes affectionately that "the image of God did evidently appear in him," and whom he praised to Calvin as "the only man at Court who opposed himself to ungodliness." In February 1562 Lord James was married to the Earl Marischall's daughter, Agnes Keith. There had been "long love" between them; in his affections, as in his ambitions, Lord James was patient and tenacious of his ends. The wedding was celebrated with more pomp than was pleasing to the godly, but the admonition from the pulpit was direct and particular enough. There was no courtly flattering of the bride. The thought was always present with Knox that by woman sin had entered into the world, by woman man was still constantly led astray. "Unto this day the Church hath received comfort by you," the preacher admonished the bridegroom, ". . . in the which, if hereafter you shall be found fainter, it will be said that your wife hath changed your nature."



So intent was Knox on this multiplied task of keeping all men right, that Randolph might well say of him: "He ruleth the roost, and of him all men stand in fear." It had been part of Mary's courtly and diplomatic training to read the weaknesses of men and turn them to account. She had signally failed with Knox, she could neither overawe nor flatter him. She made another attempt to win him by appealing to his love of influence. Some Westland priests had been apprehended for celebrating Mass at Easter (April 11, 1563), and were to be tried by the harsh enactments against all Popish observances. To Mary's indignation, she found her Council stiffly determined on carrying out the laws; even her brother was not compliant on religious matters. She hit therefore on the bold plan of appealing to Knox on behalf of her unfortunate co-religionists. She happened to be on a visit at the Castle of Loch Leven, and sent for Knox to attend her there. She received him in the castle destined to become so mournfully familiar to her, and for two hours "travailed earnestly" with him, pleading for that "liberty of conscience" which Catholic and Protestant alike claimed when they were in a minority and condemned when they were triumphant. Knox coldly entrenched himself behind the Act of Parliament. If her Majesty thought to elude the law, he threatened that "some" would be found to take the matter into their own hands. It was a distinct threat of rebellion; in his impatience, Knox was all too ready to adopt that extreme medicine of the State. Thwarted a third time in her efforts to win the unbending preacher, Mary withdrew to supper in manifest displeasure. But next morning her mood

had changed. Before the sun was up, she sent him a message to meet her west of Kinross. She was hawking early that spring morning, for she was splendidly active and hardy in her habits. She had planned this informal meeting that she might, on a friendly and familiar footing, make a last attempt to conciliate her unimpressible opponent.

No word was spoken of last night's discussion. She began to complain of Lord Ruthven and insinuated blame of Lethington, to whom she knew that Knox was hostile. With dignified reticence he refused to discuss the absent. No whit disconcerted, Mary turned the conversation on to a certain Alexander Gordon, a former bishop, now candidate for the Superintendship of Galloway. He was a time-server, and Mary's judgment of him was entirely just when she warned Knox that the man was dangerous. But Knox was irritably jealous of advice given by Mary on Church matters. Where free election was, he replied, God would not suffer His Church to be so deceived as to elect the unworthy. "Well, do as you will," replied the Queen, with unperturbed good-humour. She proceeded to introduce other subjects, while Knox tried in vain to take his leave. At last she said, "I have one of the greatest matters that have touched me since I came to this realm, and I must have your help." It was a frank offer of comradeship that not another man in Scotland could have resisted. This matter was the unhappy relations of her half-sister, the Countess of Argyle, to her husband. Knox's interest awoke at once, he was almost off his guard. Mary was encroaching on his particular province, the office of arbiter between man and wife. He was specially familiar with the

relations of the couple under discussion. He had made peace between them before, and Lady Argyle had promised to complain to no living creature till she could explain the controversy to him, her spiritual director. He had heard nothing; therefore he could confidently assure her Majesty that there was nothing but concord.

It was a masterpiece of irony—surely not unconscious—when the Queen begged him to put them at unity again “for my sake.” At parting she lightly alluded to the matter they had discussed the night before, saying: “I shall cause summon all offenders, and ye shall know that I shall minister justice.”

## CHAPTER XV.

### KNOX AND HIS CATHOLIC OPPONENTS.

NOTHING convinces one so clearly that the Catholic Church in Scotland deserved to perish—was, in fact, self-doomed to perish—as the supineness with which she acquiesced in her own destruction. Stringent as were the enactments and harsh as were the penalties against the celebration of Catholic rites, confiscation of goods for the first offence, exile for the second, death for the third, there is absolutely no contemporary instance of the last having been inflicted. It is the innovating faith, not the time-honoured faith on its trial that generally produces martyrs. Some of the bishops, Ross, Dunkeld, Dunblane, St. Andrews and others, were faithful sons of the Papacy, but their devotion stopped far short of the stake.

While these dignitaries enjoyed what they had been able to secure of their benefices, little or no provision had been made for the lower clergy. Many of these, with shameless facility, changed their religion to suit the times—at Easter preaching and administering the Sacraments in the Catholic fashion, at Whitsuntide subscribing the Confession of Faith, saying to the “rude Reformers,” “My masters, your doctrines please us.” Those priests who adhered to their religion were turned

out of their cures and practically left to starve; they and a remnant of faithful laymen met for religious observances in barns and fields and secret places very much as their opponents had done ten years before. Proclamations commanding evil-doers to leave the city bounds bracketed "obstinate Papists and massmongers, such as priests and friars," with "adulterers, fornicators, and noted drunkards." The same sweeping regulations which ousted Catholic clergy from their cures removed all school-masters and other teachers of youth from their charges. In Linlithgow there happened to be a school-master in priest's orders, Ninian Wingate, a man of "sobriety and learned simplicity"—to use one of his own happy phrases—and of singular zeal in his office. At Linlithgow he had spent, he tells us, "ten years of my most flourishing age, not without manifest utility of their commonwealth," when the newly-appointed Protestant Minister, Dean Patrick Kinloch, full of arrogant zeal and supported by his Superintendent, the good Spottiswood, must needs submit the school-master to the religious test. A fearless and faithful man, hating and despising the renegades among his brethren, Wingate refused to alter his faith at any man's bidding, and consequently was "shot out and expelled from his kindly town and his tender friends there." At a time when bishops thought it prudent to keep unbroken silence, this obscure school-master stood out almost alone as the champion of the Church, throwing the gauntlet of defiance at Knox himself. His first *Tractate*, written in beautiful old Scots, appeared in February 1562, and is addressed to Queen Mary. It is the work not of a partisan, but of a clear-sighted, patriotic thinker. He arraigns the

Churchmen with a force and irony that few of the Reformers have equalled, denouncing not only their corrupt lives but "their dumb doctrine in exalting ceremonies only . . . and far more their keeping in silence the true Word of God necessary to all men's salvation." Yet, after all, it required but little courage to attack the Churchmen when their iniquities were in the mouth of every hot-headed Reformer. Where Wingate shows his independence of judgment is in his attack on the Nobility. Their avarice, he tells them, was the cause of the abuses in the old Church. Nor are those amongst them, who now delight to be called "Gospellers" and are cunning in Scripture, any better; "who, though they call out on idolatry . . . are bound subjects to the monstrous idolatry of avarice, never intending to cleanse their hands of the rents of the Church, nor of the blood and sweat of the poor, spurring others to Reformation, but never reforming themselves." In these days, when all men are clamorous to root out idols, he can see idols set up in "kitchens," and coffers, in the market-place and even in the Temple of God. "The third idol and worst of all is the false preacher . . . showing himself as he were God; that is, exalted in the conscience and conceit of men and esteemed to have that perfection that he cannot nor may not lie."

There could be no doubt who was meant by that last idol; but, not content with this allusion, Wingate, in March 1562, challenged Knox directly, demanding by what authority he exercised spiritual dominion in the kingdom, and who gave him that authority. If he be called to his sacred office directly by God Himself, where, asks Wingate, are the miracles to attest the calling? if by man, who are they that have lawful

power to ordain to such a calling ("seeing ye renounce that ordination by the which sometime ye were called Sir John")? It is the question with which authority and tradition have in all ages met the boundless self-confidence of innovating faith. Knox never answered the challenge directly. Reasoning, arguing, meeting an adversary point to point with candour and logic, if not with courtesy, was never his habit. No written answer was vouchsafed to Wingate, but from the vantage ground of the pulpit Knox vindicated his position, and likened his "call" to that which drew Amos from his herds and sycamore-trees and drove John the Baptist into the wilderness. These prophets had done no miracles, yet no one doubted that they had been inspired. Knox constantly claimed the position accorded to "God's earlier servants," the Hebrew prophets, and claimed it on the same grounds as they—namely, the intensity of moral conviction that possessed him like a distinct message from God, and the reality of which he might neither doubt himself nor allow others to question. Prophets have, in many cases, associated with their message the claim to miraculous powers; but the difference is wide between those who base their message on their miracles and those who use their miracles to illustrate their message. Knox, especially in his later years, undoubtedly believed in his own power of foretelling events, but his predictions were almost always founded on experience and observation, and were part of his general message of God's impending judgments. Among a people always prone to superstition, this gift of prediction gained for Knox a peculiar veneration from his followers, and a peculiar fear mingled with hate from his enemies. Nor can it

be denied that this self-announced prophetic character, attested by miracles, was in the later history of the Scottish Church claimed by various Ministers, and that the claim gave them (especially in the days of persecution) a spiritual ascendancy greater than the officially supernatural authority of the Romish Priesthood. But Knox has made clear his own convictions with regard to miraculous confirmations of the Divine call in the proposition he laid down in answer to Wingate's question: "A truth by itself, without miracles, hath sufficient strength to prove the lawful vocation of the teachers thereof, but miracles destitute of truth have efficacy to deceive but never to bring to God." As for the orders conferred by Pope or priest, Knox treated them much as Cromwell treated the time-honoured constitutional forms of the English Parliament. There is a story, resting only on tradition but characteristic of the man, that once, when he was questioned about his orders, he answered impatiently, "Buf, buf, man, we are once entered; let us see who dare put us out again."

All through the spring of 1562 Wingate waited for a direct answer to his questions. In his rough arrogance Knox seems hardly to have vouchsafed to read the writings "fully and sincerely," or to have stated their contents candidly. So entirely had he failed to understand the gentle and open-minded character of his antagonist, that he stigmatized him as *progenies viparum*, to the scandal—Wingate avers—even of some of his own scholars.

The vigilance of the Reformers against the Papists was not without cause during the summer of 1562. The Holy See had given Mary time to settle down and now looked for some fruit of her rule. It was impossible



for any one at a distance to understand her helplessness to effect any religious change in her kingdom. In June 1562 the Pope sent a certain Father Goudanus as his Nuncio to Mary and to such of the bishops as were still faithful. Arrived in Scotland this priest found his situation so perilous that he had to lie hid in the house of some devout Catholics for at least a month before he could obtain a secret audience of the Queen. A rumour had gone abroad of his arrival, and Knox thundered in the pulpit against the Antichrist and his emissaries. By a curious irony, the heat of his eloquence, detaining his congregation, served the Nuncio's turn. The only time the Queen could venture to receive him was during the time of service, when Lord James and the other noblemen were safely at church. One Sunday in July while Knox up at St. Giles' was declaiming against the Popish Antichrist, down at Holyrood the Nuncio was deliberating with the Queen how she might restore her country to obedience to Rome. He may have brushed against Lord James in the Canongate as he stole back to his hiding-place. During the couple of months Goudanus passed in Scotland, he saw something of the state of the country. Churches, monasteries, and altars had been wrecked and lay in ruins; images of Christ and the Saints were prostrate in the dust.<sup>1</sup> "The Ministers," he says, "are either apostate monks or laymen of low rank, and are quite unlearned, being cobblers, shoemakers, tanners, or the like." It might have been retorted to the good

<sup>1</sup> One of the Ministers, David Fergusson of Dunfermline, speaks even more strongly of the "foul deformity of the Kirks and Temples, which are more like sheepcotes than the House of God."

Father that there had been a time in the world's history when the sole custodians of the Word of Life were unlettered fishermen. But in the matter of learning, though Erskine of Dun, the Hebraists John Row and John Lawson, Dean Winram, and even David Fergusson—originally a tanner, but well read in the Fathers and in the Scriptures—could challenge comparison with the contemporary Catholic Bishops in Scotland, still the accusation of ignorance did unfortunately apply generally to the first set of Reformed Ministers. In the succeeding generation, Andrew Melville's noble scheme of University education removed this slur from the Scottish Church.

While the Nuncio was aghast at the absence of all public Catholic observances, the Ministers were indignant that Catholic rites were still performed in certain remote parts of the country. In Ayrshire under the protection of his kinsman, the Earl of Cassilis, Quintin Kennedy, Abbot of Crosraguel, still celebrated Mass and instructed his flock in the doctrines of Holy Church. A man of learning and good life, he was the only Churchman of position who tried by pen and tongue to stem the tide of Reformation. Candid and liberal in his own way he had written frankly denouncing the abuses in the Church, but beyond this he would not go. He could not swallow his formulas; a symbol was to him as cogent as an argument; the decrees of Councils as weighty as the authority of the Scriptures. With this excellent, if somewhat hide-bound Churchman Knox held the famous "Reasoning" at Maybole in September 1562. The opponents offer a singular contrast. The Abbot desired a leisurely, academic conference in a quiet room, ample space for

the cartload of books to which he meant to refer, and an audience of twelve persons on each side. Knox had no desire to play at logical fencing, or even to meet reason with reason, but he was burning to deliver himself in the presence of a multitude, to sound the "trumpet" in the ears of the "converted" and "unconverted."

This difference of view, and also some difficulty with regard to the date, led to a curious and acrimonious correspondence.

Knox begins by disclaiming any intention of seeking dispute; he had come to the district, he declares, "simply to proclaim to the people Jesus Christ crucified to be the only Saviour." "That," retorts the Abbot, "praise be to God was no newings in this country before you were born." Knox commits himself recklessly to a sweeping retort, "I greatly doubt if ever Jesus Christ was truly preached by a Papistical prelate or monk."

A little later the Abbot declares, not without reason, "For if victory consists in clamour and crying out, I will quit you the cause without further play."

Knox had accused the Abbot of being a "dumb dog" and a "negligent pastor" and an "ignorant idolater," and the Abbot answers angrily, "I marvel how ye forget yourself, chiding and railing in this manner."

"The speaking of truth is chiding unto *you*." (The personal note is getting shrill on both sides.)

"Considering that ye said a little before, ye did abhor all chidings and railing; but nature passes nurture with you," retorts the Abbot.

"I will neither interchange nature nor nurture with you for all the profits of Crosraguel," answers Knox,

always nettled by personal criticism, even when he himself is dealing out wholesale denunciations.

In no point do these singularly contrasted opponents differ more than in the humour they both display in their writings. That of the Abbot is neat as becomes a gentleman and scholar; it plays with verbal felicities and inclines even to puns. But the humour of Knox is harsh and derisive, like rough laughter with animosity at the heart of it. In his introduction to the printed account of the "Reasoning" at Maybole, he makes merry over the idolatry of the Mass. Taking as his model the splendid satiric passage where Isaiah mocks the false gods of the heathen (Isaiah xlv. 10—18), he pours contempt upon the central symbol of Catholic worship. Having described how the "idol" is sown in the earth, nourished by rain, dew and heat, cut down by the reaper, borne home to the barn, trodden by hoof of ox, winnowed by the fan, ground by the millstone, and moulded by the baker, he goes on with indecent mirth, "The poor god of bread is most miserable of all other idols . . . for within one year the god will putrefy and then he must be burnt . . . yea, what is most of all to be feared, that god is a prey to rats and mice, for they will desire no better dinner than white, round gods enough." Time has its revenges. In that same Ayrshire two centuries later the dogmas most sacred to Knox were parodied with an irreverence as reckless, but with a humour far richer and keener, than his own. *Holy Willie's Prayer* has paid full compensation for Knox's scoffs at the Mass.

At the end of September the antagonists met in a room at Maybole. Had the Abbot been wise and alive to the great issues in question, he would have taken

the offensive ; for Knox had laid himself open to attack when he committed himself to his favourite syllogism : “ All worshipping, honouring, or service invented by the brain of man in the religion of God without His own express command is idolatry : the Mass is invented by the brain of man without any commandment of God ; therefore it is idolatry.” The Abbot was prepared to prove that this syllogism could draw no support from Scripture. Unfortunately he quitted this firm ground of attack, and, with the infatuation of too many Churchmen of his time, leaned all the weight of his defence on the shifting sands of symbols and traditions. For three days the “ Reasoning ” turned upon whether Melchisedek had brought forth bread and wine as an oblation to God or as a gift to Abraham. Knox seems to have thought it worth while to win a victory even on this ground. The “ Reasoning ” broke up before the real issues had been touched, but not before the Abbot had lost both his head and his temper. The victory, such as it was, remained with Knox.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### KNOX AND THE COURT. (1563--1564.)

To men of the prophetic or reforming type like Knox the violence, vice or greed of evil men are hardly so abominable as the frivolity and callousness of luxurious women. To Isaiah as to Amos the sensuousness and pride of the daughters of Jerusalem and Samaria were the measure of their countries' corruption. Knox had more toleration for the lawless insolence of a gallant like Bothwell than for the frivolities and extravagances of the Court ladies. He lent a greedy ear to whatever gossip and prejudice reported of a Court which, if not corrupt and indecorous, was at least unguarded in the pursuit of pleasure. He sourly describes entertainments at Holyrood as the "skipping of French fillocks and fiddlers, not very comely for honest women"; he refers to lewd ballads as evidence against the four Maries. In any other relation the character and career of Chastelar would have met with fiercest denunciations, but by treating him as the victim of her feminine caprice, Knox was able to strike a blow at the Queen's reputation; "and so received Chastelar the reward of his dancing; for he lacked his head that his tongue should not utter the secrets of our Queen." Knox had a juster cause of

offence in the extravagance of the Court. He, who had ever in his ears the cry of the over-taxed labourer in the field, and ever before his sight the silent indignity of Ministers destitute for lack of stipend, saw a luxury in banquets and pageants unknown before in the country. When dearth and severe weather set in, he recognized in these God's visible "declaration that He was offended at the iniquity that was committed even within this realm." Unfortunately trifles excited his indignation as fiercely as grave iniquities; he declared solemnly from the pulpit that God's wrath could not fail to be moved by "the targatting of the tails of the Court ladies and the rest of their vanity." He was to pay the penalty of all who are habitually violent in speech; men were growing weary of his vehemence and heedless of his warnings. Powerless and isolated, he had to stand by and see the men who had "desired to end their lives rather than change their faith," bartering not only their own salvation but the salvation of the whole people for tawdry and sensuous pleasures imported from France. Even Lord James who, Knox admitted, alone opposed the wickedness of the Court, had been won to Mary's interest by the grant of the earldom of Moray. It had been bestowed on him in the previous autumn, when Huntley, the great chief in the North, had been crushed. Mary herself had been forced to take an active part in the overthrow of the great Catholic nobleman who had offered to establish the Mass in three counties if she desired it. It was still her policy to conciliate her Protestant subjects and lull the suspicions of Elizabeth's Protestant ministers, but she must in her heart have resented the brother who made it necessary for her to take extreme measures against her own friends;

outwardly however she continued to honour and reward him. In May 1563 Mary opened her first Parliament. As she rode up the street to the Tolbooth the populace cried : " God bless her sweet face." In Parliament itself men were astonished at the eloquence of her speech. " The voice of a goddess not of a woman," they said one to the other. Knox could not deny her evident popularity ; it was gall and wormwood to him, but he had more serious cause for anxiety and indignation. The Crown had never ratified the enactments of 1560 with regard to the change of religion, and the Reformers claimed that this should be the first matter attended to in the present Parliament. Lord James—or Moray as he must henceforth be called—was deeply committed to the Reformation. In his own person he was sincerely attached to the Protestant faith ; on him was centred all the hopes of the godly. To their indignation he disappointed their trust, and Knox did not hesitate to ascribe his conduct to self-interest ; the earldom of Moray needed ratification as well as the religion of the country, and seemed to have a prior claim on Moray's interests. " The matter fell so hot between the Earl of Moray and John Knox that familiarly together they spake not for more than a year and half." Whether in the right or in the wrong—and in this case he was substantially in the right—Knox had always an authoritative dignity in his intercourse with other men, especially with those of high station. It was *he* who formally broke with the Earl. " Seeing that I perceive myself frustrate of my expectation, which was, that ye should ever have preferred God to your own affection, and the advancement of His truth to your singular (private) commodity, I commit you to your own wit



and to the conducting of those who better can please you." Moray might be dazzled by his great position, Knox saw its insecurity and unreality. "If after this ye shall decay (as I fear ye shall), call to mind by what means God exalted you." Whatever view one may take of Knox's prophetic utterances, it cannot be denied that events had a habit of justifying them.

It was not alone that Knox had keener and clearer insight into the real drift of affairs, he had a far wider outlook than most of his countrymen. Through his correspondents at the English Court, in France and at Geneva, he was kept informed of the state of religious parties all over Europe. The religious wars in France had, by the spring of 1563, left the Catholic party stronger and more consolidated; persecution was growing hot in the Low Countries; the Council of Trent was preparing measures for a concerted attack on the Reformation. And here in the meantime were the Protestant noblemen of Scotland who had fought for their faith on the sands at Leith, eagerly desirous of matching their Queen with some great Catholic potentate! In March 1563 Lethington was in London on the never-ending business of the ratification of the Treaty of Leith and the recognition of Mary as Elizabeth's successor. All agreement seemed as far off as ever, and Mary turned to other allies. Lethington had a secret interview with the Spanish ambassador in London, in which a marriage was discussed between his sovereign and Don Carlos, the heir to the Spanish crown. Lethington assured De Quadra that the Scottish nobles, though Protestant, would welcome such an alliance, and that Moray in especial was favourable to it.

Through some of his numerous correspondents, pos-

sibly through Cecil himself, rumours of these transactions reached Knox. He knew that national pride and ambition were making the Protestant noblemen indifferent to religion, he must also have felt that he had himself lost credit with most of them. These reasons served only to make his warnings all the clearer and more emphatic.

The greater part of the Nobility still resorted to the sermon at St. Giles'. From his pulpit Knox could see face after face—some estranged now and hostile—whom he had known familiarly when they had fought together for the faith. Preaching one Sunday during the session of Parliament, he recalled the extremity they had known together and the mighty deliverance they had experienced in common. "In your extreme dangers I have been with you; St. Johnstoun, Cupar Muir, and the Craggs of Edinburgh are yet recent in my heart; yea, and that dark and dolorous night wherein all ye, my Lords, with shame and fear left this town, is yet in my mind." Were they, he asked, to betray the cause for which they had fought, for the ambitious pleasure of a woman? To Knox the way out of all political and diplomatic difficulties was clear and direct. "Ask ye of her that which by God's Word ye may justly require; if she will not agree with you in God, ye are not bound to agree with her in the Devil!"

But it was not Knox's way to lay down general principles; his meaning must be unmistakable. "But this, my Lords, will I say (note the day, and bear witness after), whensoever the Nobility of Scotland, professing the Lord Jesus, consent that an infidel—and all Papists are infidels—shall be head to your Sovereign, ye do so far as in you lieth to banish Christ

Jesus from this realm." It is not surprising that "this manner of speaking was judged intolerable," Protestant and Papist being alike offended by it. Nothing was so likely to thwart the plans they secretly inclined to as this premature plain speaking. "Even his own familiars disdained him," while "flatterers posted to the Court to give advertisement" that Knox had spoken against the Queen's marriage. Apparently on the same day after dinner he was summoned to Holyrood. Of the few still faithful several, including Lord Ochiltree, accompanied him to the Abbey, but only Erskine of Dun went with him into the presence chamber.

In the early days of her dignified young widowhood, Mary had prided herself on her reticence and self-control, glancing contemptuously at Elizabeth's frank outbursts of temper. "I like not to have so many witnesses of my passions as the Queen your mistress was content to have," she had said to Throgmorton. Perhaps two years in a rougher, more passionate society had loosened her habit of self-repression; she was in a "vehement fume" when Knox was ushered into her presence. She broke into passionate reproaches. Never had Prince been so handled; she had borne patiently his rigour against herself and her uncles; she had offered him presence and audience when he desired it; all had been in vain; *now* she was resolved to be avenged. "And with these words, scarcely could Marnock, her secret chamber-boy, get napkins to hold her eyes dry for the tears; and the owling, besides womanly weeping, stayed her speech." Knox answered temperately, taking however lofty ground. He admitted her courtesy, but his vocation was such that it could receive no honour from the condescension of princes. He was sent to speak plainly

from "the preaching place," and to "flatter no flesh on the face of the earth." Her nobles were forgetting their duty to God and the Commonwealth from "being addicted to her affection"; he had only done his in admonishing them. "The Evangel," "the Commonwealth," were meaningless terms to Mary, absorbed in her own ambitions and disappointments.

"What have ye to do with my marriage? Or what are ye within this realm?"

"A subject born within the same, Madame," was the memorable answer, containing in it a century of revolution. "And," he continued, "albeit I neither be Earl, Lord, nor Baron within it, yet has God made me (how abject that ever I be in your eyes,) a profitable member within the same. Yea, Madame, to me it appertains no less to forewarn of such things as may hurt it . . . than it does to any of the Nobility; for both my vocation and conscience crave plainness of me." What he had said in the pulpit about her marriage, he now repeated before her face. Mary's passion broke forth afresh in angry sobs. With a masculine horror of tears, Erskine of Dun, "a man of meek and gentle spirit," hastily and impotently tried the comfort of kindly compliments on her beauty, while Knox stood by in grim silence. But even in his greatest, most authoritative moments, he was keenly sensitive to the opinion others had of him. It irked him now, the implied reproach of churlishness. "Madame," he said, "in God's presence I speak; I never delighted in the weeping of any of God's creatures; yea, I can scarcely well abide the tears of my own boys whom my own hand corrects, much less can I rejoice in your Majesty's weeping. But . . . I must

sustain your Majesty's tears rather than I dare hurt my conscience, or betray my Commonwealth through my silence." Still more offended, the Queen commanded "the said John" to pass out of the Cabinet and to remain in the outer room. It was full of ladies and courtiers. Knox stood among them with spare form, worn face, and keen eyes looking out from under heavy brows, the most notable figure that ever stood in a Queen's ante-room. Staunch and silent, Lord Ochiltree took up his stand beside him. The rest of the company affected not to see him. Beside him were the ladies of the Court, low-voiced, white-fingered, "in gorgeous apparel." Himself for ever haunted by the doom pronounced against mankind, he saw those bright creatures careless and at their ease in the midst of threatening mysteries. It moved him to an outburst of irony, stern indeed but not unkindly. In this "merry sort" did he "forge"—to use his own graphic expression—conversation with them. "Oh, fair ladies, how pleasant were this life of yours, if it should ever abide and then in the end that we might pass to Heaven with all this gay gear. But fie upon that knave Death, that will come whether we will or not! And when he has laid on his arrest . . . the silly soul, I fear, shall be so feeble, that it can neither carry with it gold, garnishing, targatting (bordering with tassels), pearl, nor precious stones."

In the end of June Lethington returned to Edinburgh and by his indignant denial probably confirmed Knox's belief in the reality of the Spanish project. Four months later, through the secret information that he had always at command, Knox knew certainly that it was again under discussion, and that nine members of the Council

out of the twelve were prepared to accede to the Queen's wishes. He who had once "ruled the roost" had now little influence with the Council, but he did what he could to avert the danger by warning Cecil of what was being carried on under a show of friendship with England. Moray had quarrelled with him, but he had confidence that Moray was still true to the religion he professed. "If the man most inward with you and dear unto me for those graces which God had bestowed upon him, be such as both our hearts wish him to be, then will the few number that yet remain uncorrupted strive for a season against the force of the blinded multitude." If he follow the contrary fashion, Knox foresees nothing but destruction.

After all they came to nothing, those plots and counter-plots. Don Carlos' condition, mental and physical, forbade the thought of marriage at that time, nor had Philip fully made up his mind to take all the consequences of an alliance with the Scottish Queen.

Hardly a twelvemonth later than their last interview at Holyrood, Mary was in her turn highly incensed at Knox's projected marriage. In March 1564, Randolph writes to Cecil: "Mr. Knox hath been twice proclaimed in church to be married upon Palm Sunday to Margaret Stewart, daughter of Lord Ochiltree, whereat the Queen stormeth wonderfully, for that she is of the blood and name." Some months before he had deprecated Cecil's incredulous laughter when he mentioned rumours of Knox's engagement to this "Lord's daughter, a very young lass, not above sixteen years old." It was probably to please her parents that this poor child consented to the match. The marriage, undignified and almost grotesque in itself, was twisted into endless ugly calumnies by

Knox's enemies. The mildest and wisest comment on it is Randolph's: "In this I wish that he had done otherwise." We know little of the second Mrs. Knox, except that she was a faithful and affectionate wife. Knox's few allusions to her are possibly a shade tenderer than those to Marjorie Bowes. Two years after his death she married again—this time, perhaps, to please herself. Her second husband was Andrew Ker of Faldonside, notorious as one of Riccio's murderers. He was, by conviction, an earnest Protestant, and a ruffian by habit and repute.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### KNOX AND MAITLAND OF LETHINGTON.

IN the early days after her return to Scotland, nothing could have been more studiously moderate than Mary's action with regard to religion. For her own part, she adhered firmly to her Mass; but, when a public celebration on All Hallows, November 1561, had excited another popular tumult, she acquiesced in the arrangement that she was henceforth to have her services in private.

It was on this occasion that a meeting was held between Moray, Lethington, and others of the Nobility on the one hand, and the preachers on the other, to discuss whether subjects might lawfully suppress the idolatry of their rulers. The nobles, having by their votes secured the practical result that the Queen might have her Mass, agreed to send the general question to be settled by the infallible oracle, John Calvin. Knox offered to be scribe, but Lethington undertook the office himself, affirming that "there stood mickle in the information."

Whatever Mary's ultimate plans might be, she "was not so affectioned to her Mass that she would leave a kingdom for it." Randolph wrote to Cecil that she had



very early made up her mind that three points were necessary, "To have peace with England, to be served with Protestants, and to enrich herself with the Abbey lands." It must always be remembered of course that Mary showed Randolph exactly so much of her views as would read agreeably in his report to the English Court; the tenor of her correspondence with her uncles was quite different.

The General Assembly of the Church met for the third time in December 1561. Then became evident the difference between those who were really zealous for religion—chiefly the ministers, burghers, and lesser lairds—and those—chiefly courtiers and great nobles—who had other and more political objects in view. The noblemen withdrew themselves from their brethren and met in the Abbey of Holyrood. In their anxiety to avoid friction with the Queen, they began to call in question the legality of such conventions or assemblies. As usual, the protagonists on either side were Knox and Lethington. They were well matched; if Lethington had a quick and polished mockery, peculiarly exasperating to an opponent in deadly earnest, Knox had a shrewd satiric humour of his own. Moreover he had at his command spiritual threatenings that Lethington could not afford to disregard. Himself an enlightened child of the Renaissance, they probably affected him but little, but they influenced other men, and public opinion is the very element in which politicians have to work. When it was proposed, in the Assembly of 1561, to ratify the *Book of Discipline*, it was found how hollow had been the subscriptions of the year before. Lethington had never been deceived. How many of the subscribers, he asked, would be subject to it? Would the

Duke? They had but subscribed, he added, "*in fide parentum*, as the bairns are baptized." So Knox's noble scheme was shelved, and the Reformers and their friends had to make what conditions they could for the support of their Church. The provision was meagre enough. Of the rents of the benefices two-thirds were to go to the present possessor for his lifetime, of the remaining third half was appropriated to the support of the Protestant Ministers, half was to go for "the Queen's necessities." Knox spoke out plainly in the indignation of his soul, "I am assured that the Spirit of God is not the author of this order; for, first, I see two parts freely given to the Devil, and the third must be divided between God and the Devil." If the Church had even received her portion equitably it would have been slender, but Knox only foretold the fact when he added, "Ere it be long the Devil shall have three-parts of the third." Court patronage was the great gulf that swallowed up the funds. When benefices fell vacant, Mary bestowed them on laymen without making stipulations for the support of Ministers. George Buchanan, for instance, sturdy Reformer and Republican, enjoyed later the temporalities of Croisraguel unfettered by any obligations. Another form of Court favour was to remit the payment of "the thirds" to those who held benefices. Year after year "the thirds" of St. Andrews and Pittenweem were remitted to Moray; the same benevolence was also shown to Argyle. (It is fair to add that, at the instance of a later Assembly, these leaders of Protestantism did undertake to support the Ministers out of their superfluity.)

The Catholic prelates had the mortification of seeing their rivals recognized as the Church of the country,

but they had secured a main point—life-interest in their benefices. It was the Ministers of the Church by law established who were bitterly disappointed. Unreasonable and impracticable as was their determination to force their unmitigated Protestantism on their Catholic Queen, they were convinced that only by such a course could they secure the blessing of Heaven. The “fearful idolatry of the Mass,” which was certain to bring down God’s judgment “on the head and tail, the disobedient prince and sinful people,” could not be stamped out as long as it was maintained by the Queen and sanctioned by her Protestant Council. Against these evils preaching and elaborate Church Discipline availed nothing. What was there left for them to do? “Complain!” answered Lethington impatiently. “Whom to?” “To the Queen’s Majesty.” “If the sheep,” answered Knox, “shall complain to the wolf that the wolves and whelps have devoured their lambs, the complainer may stand in danger; but the offender, we fear, shall have leave to hunt after his prey.” “Such comparisons,” said Lethington, “are very unsavoury.” Year after year in the petitions addressed by the General Assemblies to the Queen’s Majesty demanding redress of grievances, the note of menace becomes more audible. “If they be frustrate” (of their demands), runs the petition of June 29, 1562, “men will attempt the uttermost before, with their own eyes, they behold the house of God demolished.”

In August 1563 “the godly,” losing patience and prudence, attacked the Queen’s chapel at Holyrood during the celebration of Mass. She was herself absent, but the priest and her French dames, terrified by the intrusion of the angry mob, sent post-haste to summon

the magistrates. According to Knox, when these arrived on the scene they found all quiet, and "peaceable (!) men looking to the Papists and forbidding them to transgress the laws." He admits indeed that "a zealous brother, Patrick Cranstoun," had burst into the chapel and insulted the priest. "No further was done nor said," adds Knox; but, from the Criminal Trials, it appears that two more of the godly were accused of "carrying pistols, of convoking the lieges . . . and invading sundry of the Queen's domestic servants." As Secretary Lethington had said, "Mickle lies in the information."

The Queen was not unnaturally indignant, and the two zealous brethren were summoned to "underlie the Law." To Knox this was the signal for concerted resistance on the part of the Protestants. With the consent of the brethren in Edinburgh, he dispatched a letter to the godly all over the country, summoning them to be present in the capital to support their brethren on the day appointed for the trial. It was a distinct recognition of the Church as an independent body in the State, issuing her own orders, and prepared to resist the laws of the land when these opposed her interest.

A copy of Knox's letter fell into the Queen's hands; it was welcome to her as a proof that must convict her chief enemy of treason. In the end of December Knox was summoned to appear before the Queen and her Councillors. The Council sat late and, as Knox walked down the dark, wintry streets from the Netherbow to Holyrood, a crowd of his friends accompanied him, fearing for his safety. They filled the court of the palace, and even crowded up the stair.

The presence chamber was full of the Queen's

Councillors. As Knox entered, they took their places according to rank. They were all his familiars—the Duke, Moray, Ruthven, Glencairn, Argyle, and others—men with whom he had taken counsel, whom he had rebuked from the pulpit. Immediately after, Mary entered in state and took her place at the head of the long table, the Master of Maxwell and Secretary Lethington standing on either side of her. Though himself standing at the bar of judgment, Knox remained unmoved, appraising with clear eyes the beautiful woman opposite him. “Her pomp lacked one principal point,” he says, “to wit, womanly gravity; for when she saw John Knox standing at the other end of the table, bareheaded, she first smiled and after gave a gawf laughter (horse-laugh).” “Wot ye whereat I laugh?” she said. “Yon man garred (caused) me greet (weep) and grat never tear himself. I will see if I can gar him greet.”

Though some of the members of Council might be offended with Knox, they were not prepared to see him condemned. Some like Glencairn, Moray, and Argyle had regard and veneration for him, and all must have felt that he was a powerful bulwark against a possible Catholic reaction such as might at any time sweep over Scotland, as it had swept over England under Mary Tudor. There was consequently no desire to find him guilty, except on the part of Mary and her supporters.

Lethington conducted the examination and accused Knox of “convoking the lieges” without authority. Ruthven broke in, urging in Knox’s defence, “Daily he makes convocation of the people to prayer and sermon, and, whatever your Grace and others may think, we think it no treason.” This legal sophistry,

of which even "the Antichrist of Rome" need not have been ashamed, was tacitly adopted by Knox. Next it was urged against him that he had accused the Queen of cruelty. At this point Mary impatiently interrupted her Secretary, and heaped reproaches on Knox. He had defied her authority; he had made her weep. Her vehemence probably confirmed him in contempt for what he had described as the "foolish, mad, and frantic" character of women. "I began, Madame," said he, "to reason with the Secretary whom I take to be a far better dialectician than your Grace."

In the end Knox was dismissed, his judges refusing to condemn him in spite first of the persuasions and then of the angry taunts of the Queen.

He had stood his trial unmoved; what pierced him to the heart was the criticism of his own party. At the next Assembly, when diverse questions were moved, to all men's surprise he remained silent. At last, after several had questioned the reason of his behaviour, he burst out and demanded that they should either acquit or condemn him. "Words," he said, "fearful and dolorous to my heart . . . were plainly spoken, and that by some Protestants, 'What can the Pope do more than send forth his letters and expect them to be obeyed?'"

The last and most notable controversy between Knox and Lethington took place during the General Assembly of June 1564. Lethington, with mischievous enjoyment of what he knew to be their real feelings, gravely called on the Ministers present to give thanks to Almighty God for the religious freedom they enjoyed under the tolerant rule of the Queen. Then, but still with perfect suavity, he proceeded to find fault with

the doctrine generally preached concerning obedience to princes, and more especially with the customary form of prayer for the Queen. Directing his speech to Knox, he said, with an audacious irony that must have taxed his gravity, "But especially we must crave of you our brother, John Knox, to moderate yourself . . . because that others by your example may imitate the like liberty, *howbeit not with the same modesty and foresight*. Ye pray," he continued, "for the Queen's Majesty with a condition, 'Illuminate her heart *if* Thy good pleasure be' . . . in so doing ye put a doubt in the people's head of her conversion."

"Not I, my Lord, but her own obstinate rebellion causes more than me to doubt of her conversion."

"Whereunto rebels she against God?"

"In all the actions of her life," was the sweeping reply. Two special iniquities are however singled out; she maintains "that idol the Mass," and refuses to hear the preaching of the Gospel. "When," asked Knox, "shall she be seen to give her presence to the public preaching?"

"I think never," answered Lethington with conviction, "as long as she is thus entreated."

The question at issue was the "obedience," and—as Knox would have added—"disobedience due to magistrates." In his sermon of the day before he had drawn a sharp distinction between the person of the ruler and the "ordinance of God," which is "the conservation of mankind, the punishment of vice, and the maintaining of virtue," and above ruler and ruled alike. In democratic days men recognize this "ordinance of God" in the accumulated results of the human conscience and experience embodied in laws and institutions and

supported by the general consent of society. Knox apparently believed that this "ordinance of God" was committed to a righteous remnant in the community, acting in conformity to the oracles laid down in the Bible and according to precedents drawn from the Jewish Commonwealth. It is noticeable that he never indicates anybody in the nation as the depositaries of this formidable trust; one is inclined to think that what he had in his mind was the Church expressing her will through the lips of certain inspired preachers. It follows plainly that such a body could not long be bound to implicit obedience to rulers; here Scripture precedents were clearly on the side of righteous subjects disobeying and even controlling evil princes. Lethington makes the admission that *active* obedience may not be rendered to unlawful commands, but takes his stand on the doctrine—destined to play so large and so mean a part in later English politics—of passive resistance.

Far nobler and freer is Knox's contention: "Hereof, my Lord, it is plain that God craves not only that a man do no iniquity in his own person, but also that he oppose himself to all iniquity so far forth as in him lies."

"Then will ye make subjects to control their princes and rulers," answered Lethington, as if this were a *reductio ad absurdum*.

But Knox is no whit aghast at the conclusion. "And what harm should the Commonwealth receive if that the corrupt affections of ignorant rulers were moderated, and so bridled by the wisdom and discretion of godly subjects, that they should do wrong nor violence to no man?"



Lethington now approaches the practical issue of the debate. It is no question here of resisting the persecution of princes. The contention is, May and ought the Queen's Mass to be taken from her? Knox answered stiffly that not only ought idolatry to be repressed, but the idolater ought to die the death. Such a conclusion must have been repugnant to the good sense and enlightenment of Lethington, but he was painfully weighted in controversy by having, out of deference to public opinion, to acknowledge the unimpeachable authority of any and every text of Scripture. Unfortunately he forgot the precedent Knox had given nine years previously for doubting the inspiration of prophet or apostle where they disagreed with his own doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Lethington made the admission that practically lost his case, "I know the idolater is commanded to die the death." To plead the inviolability of princes was, after this, a waste of labour, though a pompous list of quotations from Luther, Calvin, Bucer and Musculus strengthened his case. Knox was familiar with the opinions of these "most famous men of Europe"; one doubts if, in his heart, he respected them much. In the present instance their judgment was beside the mark, they were laying down rules for Christians in a helpless minority; he had in his mind, "a people assembled together in one body of a Commonwealth unto whom God has given sufficient force not only to resist but to repress . . . idolatry."

Every point of this lengthy controversy had been illustrated by quotations from Scripture, and Biblical analogies are heavy armour to fight in. Lively as was

<sup>1</sup> See p. 46.

his knowledge of Jewish history, the Secretary could hardly meet Knox on every detail of the stories of Jezebel, Jehu, and Uzziah. At the end these many illustrations had only obscured counsel. "I cannot tell," said Lethington wearily, "what has been concluded." Knox on the contrary was satisfied that he had clearly proved "that God's people have executed God's law against their King, having no further regard to him than if he had been the most simple subject within this realm." "Well," said Lethington, "I fear ye shall not have many learned men of your opinion." "The truth," answered Knox, "does not cease to be the truth because men misknow it." Still he is not, he thanks God, without witnesses; he too can produce his list of authorities, certain ministers of Magdeburgh who had subscribed the declaration: "That to resist a tyrant is not to resist God, nor yet His ordinance."

Lethington, like most of the world, was only prepared to admit such authorities as bore the hall-mark of celebrity. "*Homines obscuri*," he said contemptuously. "*Dei tamen servi*," answered Knox, democrat and contemner of authorities.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE TRIUMPH OF THE UNGODLY.

It was an impossible thing in the sixteenth century for a Catholic prince to rule peacefully over a Protestant community, or even over a community where a majority was Protestant. Moray and Lethington tried to ignore this fact; dazzled by hopes of the English succession and of some great foreign alliance, they persuaded themselves that Mary—perhaps the cleverest and most ambitious woman in Europe—would consent to leave the administration of her kingdom in their capable hands. Knox was under no such delusion. He believed such an arrangement to be impossible and did his utmost to make it so.

By the spring of 1564, Mary must have been heartily sick of the dissimulation she had been compelled to practise. While she continued to endorse the acts against her co-religionists in Scotland, she was actively corresponding with the Pope, assuring him of her devotion to the Church and determination to restore her people to its fold, and receiving in return his blessing and promise of help (February and June 1564). The pretence of friendship with the Queen of England had grown threadbare with the friction of secretly opposing interests and ostensible affection. Elizabeth in

1564 insulted her cousin by offering her as a husband her own discredited lover, Lord Robert Dudley; "her groom," Mary called him in disdain. This facile nobleman, already in correspondence with the King of Spain and the French Huguenots, thought it worth his while to try and conciliate the Scottish Reformer. Knox was not pervious to flattery; his reply was cautious and non-committal; he contented himself with pointing Lord Robert to the steep and thorny path to Heaven and gave no encouragement to his designs on the Scottish throne.

Deeply disappointed by the failure of the Spanish schemes, Mary, in the summer of 1564, turned her thoughts towards her cousin Lord Darnley, after herself, the next heir to the English throne and the hope of the English Catholics. All that summer rumours were rife of this change in the Queen's policy. Knox, always on the alert for signs of danger, wrote to Randolph in May 1564: "The Mass shall up; the Bishop of Glasgow and Abbot of Dunfermline come as ambassadors from the General Council (of Trent). My Lord Bothwell shall follow with power to put in execution whatsoever is demanded, and our Sovereign will have done; and then shall Knox and his preaching be pulled by the ears."

With growing confidence Mary pursued her independent policy; in September 1564 the first step towards the Darnley alliance was made by the recall of his father, Lennox. It is probable that one of Mary's motives at this time was a desperate desire to escape from her brother's tutelage. Knox said that she hated him "for the image of God that was apparent in him," but Knox is hardly an impartial judge. She probably

thought that she had other and sufficient reasons for distrusting and disliking him. He was recognized by the Catholics as their chief opponent; he had always been a close ally of the English Queen; he stood perilously near the throne and commanded popular confidence. After the breach between them was complete, Mary referred bitterly in a proclamation to "some who bore the whole sway with us," and who "would be kings themselves, or at least leaving to us the bare name and title, would take to themselves the credit and whole administration of the kingdom."

There are three significant items of news in the letters Randolph wrote to Cecil under the dates February 19 and March 4 (1565) respectively. "Darnley comes to Court and is well received. It is suspected that his presence may hinder other things and that his religion is Popish." The next is: "Murray of Tullibardine comes from Bothwell out of France to sue for . . . liberty (*i. e.* for Bothwell) to return;" and the third is: "An Italian Piedmontese, a singer, is in place of Raulet, her secretary for the French." Each of these men, Darnley, Bothwell, Riccio, was to have a sinister influence on the fate of the woman who, in her turn, was to involve each of them in death or dishonour.

Darnley was merely a petulant, dissolute lad, insolent in prosperity, abject in adversity, pushed into a great position by the ambition of a clever mother and the brief infatuation of the Queen. A far abler man was Riccio. He had made himself indispensable to the Queen by his ability and devotion to her interests. From the time he undertook her foreign correspondence her relations to Rome certainly grew closer. He

was popularly suspected of being in the pay of the Pope. In Bothwell, Mary knew that she had a violent and unscrupulous servant who would hesitate at no crime in her interests. Surrounded as she was by overt enemies and doubtful friends, she felt the value of his ruffianly fidelity. "Our Queen thinks to have him at all times ready to shake out of her pocket against us Protestants,"<sup>1</sup> Knox had written to Randolph a year earlier (April 1564).

Through the spring of 1565, Mary, Riccio and Darnley ruled the Court in their own way, surrounding themselves with the most reckless of the younger Nobility. The Protestant nobles, the old Lords of the Congregation, withdrew more and more from Court, and in March Moray, the Duke of Chatelherault and the Earl of Argyle drew up a bond for their mutual support and defence.

It is an irreparable loss that just at this point where the history becomes most complicated and dramatic, Knox's narrative comes to an end. He had been reconciled to Moray—probably about the date of Lennox's return (September 1564)—and was doubtless in the confidence of the Protestant Lords, but of this there is no record. It was a time of plots and counter-plots. Disquietude and suspicion took possession of the people; there was constant friction between the old religion and the new. The Catholics were emboldened to hold their services more openly; even in the Queen's absence (February 1565) many resorted to her chapel in Holyrood. A priest, discovered saying Mass, was tied for several hours to the Cross of Edinburgh by the

<sup>1</sup> The letter in which this passage occurs is anonymous and is variously ascribed to Knox or Kirkcaldy of Grange.

authorities, and pelted by the fierce mob with rotten eggs till he was insensible. Naturally enough Mary hotly resented this outrage. Still she was not prepared to break with the Protestants. More than ever in need of popular support, she even courted their approval. She promised vaguely to hear certain preachers. Above all others, she said, she would gladly hear the Superintendent of Angus, "for he was a mild and sweet-natured man, with true honesty and uprightness, John Erskine of Dun." When, however, the General Assembly made its usual impracticable and aggressive demand for the suppression of the Mass as well in the Queen's own person as generally, she answered roundly that she would not give up the religion in which she had been brought up nor imperil her alliance with the Catholic powers. The brethren in Edinburgh, regarding this as a challenge, held a tumultuous meeting on St. Leonard's Crags, chose leaders, and behaved like men on the eve of a revolt. At Stirling the Protestant Lords, Moray, the Duke, Argyle, Kirkcaldy of Grange, Ochiltree, Glencairn were already under arms and believed themselves to be secure of support from the English Queen.

Elizabeth was, or pretended to be, highly incensed by Mary's proposed marriage with Darnley. Her cousin's displeasure and the opposition of the Protestant Lords only incited Mary to precipitate action; on Sunday, July 28, she made her first irreparable mistake by marrying Darnley. After the wedding there was a short interval of inaction like the ominous hush before the breaking of a thunder-storm. Summonses were sent to all the Nobility to appear in arms within fifteen days to assist the Queen against the

Rebel Lords. At the same time futile attempts were made to conciliate the Protestants in Edinburgh. On Sunday, August 19, Darnley went in state to St. Giles' to hear Knox preach from the text "Oh, Lord our God, other lords than Thou have ruled over us." This is the only sermon of Knox's that has come down to us, and it must be confessed that without the passion of his voice and manner, the notes of the trumpet sound tame and long drawn out. On that Sunday morning however the excitement that was filling all men's hearts supplied sufficient weight to the words of the preacher. Sitting sullen and restless under the inordinate length of the sermon—Knox himself admits that it exceeded the appointed time by more than an hour—Darnley was startled into attention by certain emphatic passages. "The same justice remaineth in God to punish thee, Scotland," rang out the voice from the pulpit, "and thee, Edinburgh in especial, that before punished Judah and the City of Jerusalem . . . for this is the only cause why God taketh away 'the strong man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the prudent and the aged, the captain and the honourable, the counsellor and the cunning artificer.'" Dull as he was, even the King could supply the names that occurred to the minds of all present—Moray, Glencairn, Grange, Argyle, Ochiltree. Still more distinctly fell the next sentence on his awakened sense: "And I will appoint, saith the Lord, children to be their princes and babes shall rule over them. Children are extortioners of My people, and women have rule over them."

Darnley returned to Holyrood and, like the petulant boy he was, refused to eat his dinner till he had avenged



his outraged vanity. Late that evening Knox was brought from his bed to appear before the Council. He was suspended from preaching during such time as their Majesties should remain in Edinburgh. It was a nominal penalty; a week later the King and Queen had departed towards the West to take vengeance on the Rebel Lords. Mary was to know the sensation of riding at the head of an army in a steel cap with pistols in her saddle-bow. Even Knox is forced into an unwilling tribute of admiration. "Albeit, the most part waxed weary," he wrote, "yet the Queen's courage increased man-like so much, that she was ever with the foremost." The rapidity and decision of her action ensured success. The Protestant Lords, not daring to risk a battle, eluded Mary, and on August 31, 1565, rode by the West Port into Edinburgh, in number merely thirteen hundred men. Knox, sitting in his study in the Netherbow, heard the Castle guns opening fire on them as they rode up the West Bow. "The terrible roaring of guns," he writes, "and the noise of armour do so pierce my heart that my soul thirsteth to depart." The people of Edinburgh, so valiant against helpless priests, so warlike on St. Leonard's Crag, refused to join the Lords though they were offered good pay "for defending the glory of God." With no following in their own country, the Lords were basely repudiated by their ally, Queen Elizabeth, and in their poverty and humiliation found but a bare and inhospitable admittance into England. Mary's triumph over her enemies seemed complete.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE GENERAL FAST. (MARCH 1566.)

CLOUDS were gathering round the Reformed Church when the General Assembly met on December 28, 1565. Though Mary still affected an unaggressive policy in religious matters, Catholic rites were openly celebrated and it had become the fashion to neglect the sermon and attend the Royal Chapel. Among the Queen's immediate following, Bothwell alone sturdily refused to go to Mass.

The Protestant Ministers were full of anxiety about their own position. The Laird of Pitarrow, who had been Controller or Treasurer of the Church, had joined the Rebel Lords; since his departure the Ministers had not received one penny of their stipends. Mr. James Melville, in his graphic and intimate Diary, gives a touching picture of the distress prevalent in the homes of the clergy. Promising lads were removed from school to receive intermittent teaching from fathers burdened with too much work and too many cares. The children of the household became pathetically familiar with anxiety for daily bread, or, with precocious sympathy, feared lest the head of the family might be driven by poverty to relinquish his charge, and so lose

his part in the Kingdom of God. Ballads of godly exhortation passed from hand to hand.

“Who so do put hand to the plough,  
And therefrom backward goes;  
The Scripture makes it plain enough,  
My Kingdom is not for those.”

There are two letters of Knox written during this Assembly; one to the Ministers whom poverty was driving to give up their cures, one to the congregations on behalf of the Ministry. In the first letter the reality of the trial is gravely admitted. “We who admonish you are not ignorant, neither yet altogether without experience how vehement a dart poverty is.” When he had himself left London with ten groats in his pocket and the long road to Newcastle before him, it had troubled him “but little.” So now, he exhorts his brethren “to be ashamed to faint suddenly, even in the brunt of the battle.” “It is but poverty that as yet doth threaten us, which, if we be not able to condemn, how shall we abide the fury and terror of death?”

The letter addressed to the laity has a different but an equally direct and noble message. Men, he tells them, are now called on to testify to the reality of their faith by making a sacrifice of their substance. “Let us therefore begin to reverence the blessed Evangel of our salvation. Reverence and magnify it we cannot, when that we suffer the true preachers thereof to be oppressed with poverty before our eyes, and yet we shut up the bowels of mercy from them.”

Poverty and an uncertain future were not the only ills that troubled the Church of Scotland; disquieting rumours came from abroad of a secret bond that was

being formed between the great Catholic powers for the destruction of the Reformation. Everywhere it was currently reported that the Council of Trent had decreed that Bishops and Cardinals should be taxed for this good work. The Scottish Protestants feared, and not without reason, that their Church would be among the first to be attacked. Substantially these rumours corresponded with the facts, though the alliance had not been completed before the death of Pius IV, in December 1565. His successor, Pius V, was a militant Catholic whose little finger was thicker than his predecessor's loins. In January 1566 he sent a message to urge on Mary the restoration of her kingdom to the Catholic fold. Mary was at last preparing to commit herself to a policy of aggression. "With the help of God and your Holiness," she replied, "I will leap over the dyke."

With the world full of these uneasy rumours, the General Assembly had to prepare means of defence. The "arm of the flesh" was powerless, politic alliances had failed ignominiously; in this sore strait nothing remained to the faithful but to return unto "the Eternal, their God," with humility and repentance and confession of sins. A general fast was fixed for the beginning of March, and Knox drew up not only the order to be observed in the same but also an instruction to the faithful how they might fitly prepare for this act of public repentance. To his eye the Divine judgment was plainly manifested in the apparent triumph of the ungodly. God, he was convinced, must deny His own justice before He could leave unpunished the flagrant sins and shortcomings of His chosen people. Avarice, greed and injustice had been shameful blots

on the Reformed Church of Scotland in her hour of success; peasants who had enjoyed "a moderate and reasonable life" under their Catholic masters—it is Knox's own admission—were so ground down by the new landowners that "for poverty the ancient labourers are compelled to leave the ground in the hands of the lords." These are specific sins that must be repented of and renounced on the day of national humiliation. The sophistries of the world—as threadbare in the sixteenth century as now—are swept aside: "We see no good reason why it should be thought impossible that men . . . should begin to express in their lives that which in word they have publicly professed." It may not serve the landowner who oppresses the poor to plead: "I may do with my own as best pleaseth me;" nor may the dishonest merchant or craftsman excuse himself, saying: "The world is evil, and how can men live if they do not do as others do?" "Let us be assured," says Knox, "that these be the sins that have provoked God . . . to destroy and utterly overthrow strong realms and flourishing Commonwealths." He lays down short and simple rules for amendment: "Let every man speak the truth with his brother; let none oppress or defraud another in any business; let the bowels of mercy appear among such as God hath called to His mercy." These passages—bald though they be in form and lacking in Knox's peculiar eloquence—are faithful echoes of the voice that, centuries before, had rung through Israel: "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

Whilst the Church was thus taking counsel with herself, other and very different meetings and conferences were being held secretly in Edinburgh. The strange and almost incredible fact is that the very men who were engaged in preparing the order of the Fast were probably not ignorant of the sinister plot that was being hatched at their side.

Mary's prosperity had never seemed greater; her prospects of becoming a mother had increased her popularity. But she was surrounded by men absorbed in personal ambitions and grievances, and had no one sincerely and disinterestedly her friend. Riccio indeed was her devoted and confidential servant; consequently hatred of him united men moved by every motive, from the mean and calumnious jealousy of Darnley to the patriotism and religious zealotry of Knox. The bulk of the Nobility despised the accomplishments of the Italian, and fiercely envied his position; the Protestants saw in him an emissary of the Pope and the chief obstacle to the return of the banished Lords. For many weeks conclaves had been held in secret; messengers had been sent to Moray and his friends at Newcastle; Randolph was aware of the plot; in ambiguous phrase Lethington hinted at it in a letter to Cecil; Riccio himself was warned of the danger; Mary alone seems to have been entirely unconscious.

She had fixed on Thursday, March 7, for the opening of Parliament, when she meant to introduce a Bill of Attainder and Forfeiture against Moray and the other rebels. The General Fast was appointed to begin on the previous Sunday, March 3, and to continue till the following Saturday. Every day of that week, before noon and after, the faithful crowded into St. Giles'.

Was it by accident that, for an occasion of national confession of sins, the fiercest stories out of the Old Testament had been chosen as appropriate lessons? The rooting out of idolatry in Israel, Gideon destroying the altar of Baal, Jael treacherously slaying the enemy of her country, the destruction of the Benjamites; these stories must have stirred dark, uneasy expectations among the impressionable congregation.

On Thursday the Queen passed to the Tolbooth "in wondrous gorgeous apparel," but it was noticed that few of the Lords accompanied her. That day the Bill of Attainder was prepared against Moray and his friends. Quite near, in St. Giles', Knox was reading to his congregation out of the Book of Esther, how destruction was planned against God's people, and how the services of faithful Mordecai were forgotten. In the gathering twilight of the wintry afternoon the lesson was completed of vain-glory suddenly overthrown: "Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow also am I invited by her together with the king;" up to the vengeful climax: "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai." Then the hoarse, high voice of the preacher ceased, and the book was shut.

On Saturday afternoon, March 9, this ominous Fast came to an end, and at seven that evening Riccio sat down to supper with the Queen in her cabinet. No familiarity with the incidents that follow can lessen their horror; the appearance of Darnley's mean, handsome face at the supper party; his perfidious caress; the sound of armed men behind the arras; the apparition of Ruthven grey and gaunt as a vengeful spectre;

the dark, cruel face of Morton behind ; the outcry and sudden darkness as the torches are overturned ; the poor wretch clinging to Mary's skirts ; his dying shrieks echoing from the outer entry. Hardly was the deed completed when, from the court below the window came the tramp of feet and murmurs of an excited crowd ; the Provost, alarmed at the tumult, had arrived with the Town Guard ; Darnley's voice from the open window assured them that all was well, and, leaving a guard, they returned to Edinburgh.

Mary was not the woman to sit down tamely under an outrage. With deliberate fascination and terrible coolness of dissimulation, she lured Darnley back to her side till the mean-spirited boy was fain to buy her favour by betraying his fellow-conspirators. Taking him with her, she stole secretly from Holyrood on the night of Monday, March 11, and fled to Dunbar. The conspirators, balked of their triumph and anxious about their own fate, kept together in Edinburgh, but held themselves prepared for flight. That Knox felt his own position insecure is proved by a remarkable prayer written on Tuesday, March 12, in which, as if on the eve of a crisis, he settles his account with Almighty God. It begins with that touch of greatness inseparable from everything he wrote : "John Knox, with deliberate mind to his God." In his *History* he never disguises nor modifies his exultation over the murder of that "great abuser of our Commonwealth, that poltroon and vile knave Davie, who was justly punished the 9th of March" ; but in his prayer there is no triumphant thanksgiving, rather despondency and heavy anxiety for the future. The confession of sins with which the prayer begins, sincere though it be, is such as devout



men have made in all ages ; the thanksgiving for special mercies is heartfelt and individual. "For being drowned in ignorance Thou hast given me knowledge above the common sort of my brethren. . . Thou hast compelled me to fore-speak as well deliverance to the afflicted, as destruction to certain inobedient ; the performance whereof, not I alone, but the very blind world has already seen."

By March 18 Mary had collected her friends and returned to Edinburgh to take vengeance on all who were concerned in the murder. On her approach they fled, Morton and Ruthven to Berwick, Lethington to the Highlands, and "John Knox, Minister of Edinburgh, likewise departed from the said burgh at two hours after noon with a great mourning of the godly of religion."

It is impossible to decide how far Knox was party to the plot to remove Riccio. He was probably privy to it to the same degree as Bedford and Cecil were privy to it. His name, along with that of his colleague John Craig, appears on the list copied in the handwriting of Bedford's clerk, and sent to the English Government enclosed in Randolph's dispatch from Berwick, March 21 ; it is absent from the second list (in Randolph's handwriting) sent from Berwick on March 27, after Morton's arrival. Morton and Ruthven writing to Cecil on the same date declare that none of the Ministers "were art or part of that deed nor were participate thereof." "Art or part," in Morton's phraseology means, however, active participation, and does not include knowledge of the plot.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Earl of Morton's trial in Bannatyne's *Memorials*.

## CHAPTER XX.

### FALL OF MARY. (1567.)

FOR the next fifteen months (from March 1566 to June 1567) Knox was a fugitive, first in Kyle and later in the North of England. Cut off from preaching and from public life, he had—fortunately for us—time to resume the writing of his *History*, laid aside since 1560. Books I. and IV. were written at this time. Perhaps the only writings with which this *History* can be fitly compared are the historical books of the Old Testament. Like the various writers of Samuel and Kings Knox sees the course of history against a clearly defined background of the Divine purposes and judgments; like them he breaks the narrative to introduce episodes and dialogues out of proportion to the scheme of the book but startling in their picturesque reality. The style is terse and rapid, and abounds in sentences winged and pointed like arrows. Unlike most of his countrymen who—with the exception of Lethington—wrote in Scots, Knox writes in clear, excellent English, with an intermixture of Scotch words. His Catholic opponent, Ninian Wingate, makes it a reproach to him “that, through curiosity of novations,” he had “forgotten that old plain Scots which

his mother learned him." The passionate prejudices of the passing hour pervade and colour every page of Books I. and IV. Mary of Guise is specially hateful as the mother of "our Jezebel Mistress." At more than one point, the writer breaks away from his story to exult over the punishment of "that vile knave Davie." In one emphatic passage he clearly incites to rebellion, bidding men turn to their God Who will either cut off that wicked woman in her sin (the original expression is coarser), "or else shall put it in the heart of a multitude to take the same vengeance upon her that has been taken of Jezebel and Athaliah." Over against this passage on the margin are two entries, one merely the date when it was penned, "April 1566," the other the exultant prayer "*Perfice quod coepisti, mi Deus, propter tui nominis gloriam,*" and the significant date, "June 15, 1567," the day when Mary's reign ended tragically on Carberry Hill.

To Knox the shame and discomfiture of her who had been so radiant and gracious in her prosperity was a triumphant vindication of God's just judgments; to us, who try and spell out the dark, pitiful story by the uncertain light of contradictory records, it seems like the last awful act of a tragedy where Mary is at once the victim and the author of her fate. It is only possible here to indicate certain moments in the drama. After Riccio's murder, Mary had seen the necessity of reconciliation with Moray; in the following September (1566) she brought herself to pardon Lethington, whose services, indeed, she could not forego. All through that summer it was noticeable to every one that none so fully possessed her favour and confidence as Bothwell; of all the inner circle of her Court, he alone had never

betrayed her. Meanwhile her husband became daily more intolerable to her, his fatuous and dissolute behaviour would, in fact, have alienated a less high-spirited woman. While Mary carried in her proud heart an unforgiving remembrance of the part he had played in Riccio's murder, his betrayal of his allies had brought on him the malignant hostility of all the nobles about the Court. When any man's existence became obnoxious, there was but one method of dealing with him in the Scotland of the sixteenth century.

In the end of November 1566 Mary and her Court were at Craigmillar, a castle in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh. A scheme was arranged by Moray, Lethington, Argyle, Huntly, and Bothwell for inducing the Queen to restore Morton and others, banished for Riccio's murder. If she would consent, they offered in return to free her from her husband. In the previous June (1566) Mary had given birth to a son, Prince James, and she now demurred at any arrangement that might cast a doubt on the child's legitimacy. That a way might be found of disposing of the father without injuring the son, was hinted by Lethington, not obscurely. He added: "And albeit my Lord of Moray, here present, be little less scrupulous for a Protestant nor your Grace is for a Papist, I am assured he will look through his fingers thereto, and will behold our doings, saying nothing to the same." This noticeable sentence—reported by Huntly and Argyle who were both present—would seem to lay the same measure of guilty foreknowledge on Mary and on Moray.

It is possible—those who hold the Casket Letters

to be genuine must consider it certain—that beneath this plot, lawless and cruel indeed, but not abnormally base in that age and country, was another hideous understanding between Mary and Bothwell. There is one incident that might be brought in as evidence that Bothwell, at least, was indulging ambitious dreams. Curiously enough, this incident is also notable as calling forth one of the only two public utterances of Knox during the year in which he was a fugitive. On the eve of starting for England his anxious vigilance for the Church was roused by hearing that the Archbishop of St. Andrews had “*by means of the Earl of Bothwell*” procured from Mary the restoration of his “consistorial jurisdiction.” This privilege was conferred on him alone of all the Catholic prelates. Among other powers, it put into his hands the decision of all cases of marriage and divorce within his diocese; and that diocese included the Lothians in which Hailes, Bothwell’s domicile, was situated. But what roused Knox’s alarm was the power of judging cases of heresy which this “consistorial jurisdiction” would restore to the arch-enemy of the Reformed Church. He saw in it the first step towards the re-establishment of the Roman Antichrist. To submit to this new tyranny, what is it, he asks, but “to separate ourselves and our posterity from God; yea, and to cut ourselves from the freedom of this realm?” The Archbishop never sat in judgment on a single heretic. The sole use he made of his restored rights was, in the following May, to pronounce sentence of divorce between James, Earl of Bothwell, and Jean Gordon, his wife.

In the end of December 1566 Knox departed to England, bearing with him the protest of the Scottish

Church against the ritual innovations that Elizabeth was forcing on her sorely perplexed prelates. Their difficulties would hardly be lessened by the earnest invective of the neighbouring Church against the "Romish rags."

Of the ensuing months which Knox spent in England, no record remains. If the monstrous events which followed one another thick and fast in Scotland drew passionate comments from him, unfortunately no syllable has come down to us.

In the beginning of February Darnley, sick in body but cheered in spirit by apparent reconciliation with his wife, took up his abode in meanly-appointed lodgings in the ruinous Kirk-o'-Field. On the 8th of the same month Moray, always determinedly blameless, obtained permission to visit his wife at St. Andrews. On the evening of the 9th, Mary sat in friendly converse with her sick husband till ten, when she suddenly recollected her promise to attend a masque at Holyrood in honour of the wedding of Bastiat, her French servant, and left him alone in the house with a couple of servants. Between two and three next morning the citizens of Edinburgh were startled out of their sleep by a loud explosion.

While, with fatal callousness, Mary left all investigations of the murder to Bothwell, popular instinct at once fixed on him as the author of the crime; placards posted on the door of the Tolbooth even bracketed the Queen's name with his as an assenting party. Again the Edinburgh mob played its ominous part as chorus to the play. Strange voices heard at midnight in the silent streets called aloud for vengeance on Bothwell and the Queen.

Abroad, the darkest suspicion fell upon Mary. Her faithful ambassador at the French Court, the Bishop of Glasgow, was hardly himself convinced of her innocence, and could get little credence when he asserted it to others. In London the Spanish ambassador reported that many even among the Catholics believed her guilty.

Guilty or innocent, her conduct was fatally imprudent. It was only after a lapse of two months, and in consequence of pressure from England, that she saved appearances by letting Bothwell stand an assize.

Argyle, the judge, was himself one of the conspirators, the jury were venal; Bothwell's friends and followers fully armed filled the town; Mary herself looked forth and waved him God-speed as he rode under her window to his trial. Old Lennox dared not appear for the prosecution, and the shameless farce ended in triumph for the murderer. On April 24, Bothwell waylaid and carried Mary off to the castle of Dunbar. Whether this was with or without her consent will always be a disputed question. By May 3 they were back at Holyrood and Mary had announced her intention of marrying her captor. So far his schemes had succeeded by virtue of their very audacity. But the other Lords had not conspired to murder Darnley merely to put Bothwell in his place. Moray, very characteristically, had left the country before Bothwell's assize and was now in France. Lethington, Morton, Grange and the others drew together to Stirling, vigilant and menacing. One voice only was fearlessly raised in protest against these infamous proceedings. John Craig, Knox's colleague, standing in the presence of Bothwell and the Secret Council, "laid to his charge, the law of adultery, the

ordinance of the Church, the law of ravishing, the suspicion of collusion betwixt him and his wife, the sudden divorce, . . . and last, the suspicion of the King's death, which his marriage would confirm." Admirers of Knox may almost grudge his colleague such an opportunity!

One miserable, feverish month of married life was all that was gained by so much rashness and crime. On June 15, on Carberry Hill, Mary and Bothwell were parted for ever. The indignant decision of a whole nation was too strong to be resisted even by wills as passionate as theirs.

True to the Scotch love of decent legal forms, the nobles in taking up arms against the pair kept up the fiction that they were acting solely against Bothwell and in defence of Mary. But on Carberry Hill, as soon as the Queen was in their hands, they gladly connived at the escape of her husband; his trial and confession would have complicated the situation painfully for most of them. As it was, they found themselves in a wholly untried and sufficiently difficult position. There were various powers to be considered, for they were acting in the face of all Europe. The French Court was quiescent but Elizabeth would not for a moment endure the dangerous precedent of subjects calling their sovereign to account. By the beginning of July she had sent her ambassador Throgmorton to Scotland to demand that Mary should be set at liberty. At home the Queen was hardly imprisoned at Lochleven, before the Hamiltons were forming a party, ostensibly on her behalf, though they were equally willing to consent to her death, if such a course would further the fortunes of their house. But there was a power more formidable than any of these that had to be reckoned with. The



Scottish people had become articulate and were fiercely demanding justice. When Mary passed along the ranks after she had yielded to the Lords at Carberry Hill, the men-at-arms cried aloud, "Burn the murderess of her husband," till Grange silenced them, striking with the flat of his sword. When she entered Edinburgh, "her face soiled with mud and tears," her clothes bespattered, her whole frame shaken with misery and impotent rage, the crowd, pressing on her, yelled insults and curses. Throgmorton on his arrival was astonished at the strength of popular feeling. "The Lords," he said, "dared not show as much lenity to the Queen as they would wish, for fear of the angry people. The women be most furious and impudent against the Queen, but yet the men be mad enough."

But popular sentiment against crime changes rapidly into sentimental interest in the criminal whom justice has overtaken. "Before many weeks were passed the hatred of the people was by process of time turned into pity." But between the self-interested policy of the nobles and the fleeting passion of the crowd lay the compact body of opinion held by the burghers and country gentlemen, the men who made up the strength of the Protestant Church. On July 20 the Assembly met. Throgmorton had wished to have it prorogued, Lethington had tried to persuade the more moderate members to refrain from all matters touching the Queen. Both recognized Mary's most formidable enemies in these men of clear moral convictions and relentless severity. "It is the public speech amongst all the people and amongst all the estates, saving the Councillors," Throgmorton reported to his Government, "that their Queen hath no more liberty nor privilege

to commit murder nor adultery than any other private person, neither by God's laws, nor by the laws of the realm." It is not difficult to guess from whom this lesson had been learned.

It was the policy of the Confederate Lords to profess zeal for religion and to ally themselves with the preachers. A few days after Mary's imprisonment, Lord Glencairn had broken down the altars and images at Holyrood, "to the great contentment" of the zealous Protestants. At this date Knox was probably back at Edinburgh to applaud the pious deed. At the end of June, he, Craig and others of their colleagues were sent by the Confederate Lords to the West Country to persuade the Hamiltons to enter into alliance with them. The embassy was fruitless. Knox had no longer, as in the first Civil War, power to control statesmen and dictate a policy, but he had created a formidable public opinion in the people at large, and this he continued to direct and inflame by his sermons. He demanded open judgment on the Queen and condign punishment if she were proved guilty, threatening "the great plague of God to this whole nation if she were spared." As the mouthpiece of the newly-awakened national conscience, as the voice of the Reformed Church, he enunciated God's eternal decrees against murder and adultery, and, in the face of Elizabeth and every Court in Europe, insisted that Princes and Queens are subject to the laws of their country. At the same time it cannot be denied that Knox was influenced by personal animosity and religious prejudice. More than once he had been the apologist for murder; no syllable of compunction softens his exultation at the deaths of Beaton and Riccio. The nature of Mary's guilt, if guilty she were, was, it is

true, peculiarly abhorrent. The Reformed Church was specially severe on sins of the flesh, as the records of every Assembly bear ample witness. But Knox has left no expression of amazement at the special nature of the crime, far less of any austere pity for the criminal, rather he seems to exult that Mary's depravity (which he had recognized from the beginning) should now be patent to the whole world. From the moment of her landing he had wished for her deposition. A woman in authority, an idolatress ruling over a faithful people, had been alike obnoxious to his political and his religious convictions. It was probably the fulfilment of wishes he had long cherished in secret when Mary was compelled to abdicate, and her brother, the Earl of Moray, was appointed Regent for the infant Prince.

When James was crowned at Stirling on July 29, Knox preached the sermon, taking for his text the coronation of the young king Joash. It was a bitter mortification to him that he could not persuade the nobles to forego the Jewish rite of anointing.

On August 22, 1567, Moray was proclaimed Regent. He had carefully secured every step to the supreme power; he had waited in France till the Confederate Nobles were convinced that they could not do without him; in that strange midnight conversation with Mary at Lochleven, he had so worked on her fears as to induce her to urge him to accept the Regency; but his main strength lay in the support of the preachers and the men they influenced.

No one has denied Moray's capacities as a ruler. Like all the earlier Stuarts—Mary no less than her father and grandfather—he had the prompt decision and strong hand that could enforce his will. Moreover,

he had learned from Knox a moral and religious, albeit narrow and rigid, ideal of his country's welfare. "He seeks to imitate rather some that have led the people of Israel than any captain of our age," wrote Throgmorton, in the very early days of his Regency. Under the care of such a ruler the Reformed Church might fairly hope to recover the position she had held for a moment before Mary's return (1560-61). It is significant of the increased power of the Church that at the next Assembly (December 1567), both the Earl and Countess of Argyle were subjected to penance in the congregation; he for conjugal infidelity, she for her presence at the Papistical rites of the young King's baptism. In the Parliament of the same date the Thirds were appointed for the sustentation of the Church. To Knox it seemed at last as if his work were done, as if the Joshua had arisen who was to lead into the Promised Land the people he had himself led through the desert from the House of Bondage. It is touching to find his thoughts going back to the old days of peaceful exile at Geneva. "God comfort that dispersed little flock, amongst whom I once lived with quietness of conscience and contentment of heart; and amongst whom I would be content to end my days, if so it would stand with God's good pleasure . . . I can give no reason that I should so desire, other than that my heart so thirsteth." Knox was premature in believing that his "battle" was over; in some ways, "the worst and the last" was still to come.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MORAY'S REGENCY. (1567—1570.)

ON May 2, 1568, Mary escaped from Lochleven, and set the whole world aflame again. Her defeat at Langside and flight into England were to complicate European politics for the next eighteen years.

There is an obscure little incident which curiously and, as it turned out, fatally connects Knox with the battle of Langside. On May 22, nine prisoners taken on the field were put to an assize, convicted and sentenced to death. It had always been Knox's privilege to intervene between those condemned to suffer and the last rigour of the law. The nine "were pardoned at the request of Mr. Knox." One of the number was *Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh*.

With the dreary and discreditable farce of the Conferences at York and at Westminster—where the mutual accusations of Mary and her rebellious subjects were submitted to Commissioners appointed by Elizabeth, (October to December 1568,)—Knox had no concern; his biographer is thus mercifully spared the perilous task of pronouncing on the genuineness of the Casket Letters. With Knox at his elbow, instead of Buchanan, Moray could not have held the wary,

compromising course he did; at one point prepared to make a composition with Mary and to receive her back, with restricted powers but whitewashed reputation, and, at another, to produce evidence—carefully elaborated—such as must, for very shame, have driven all her friends from her. For indeed the effrontery and cleverness of one Queen and the mendacity, wilfulness and fickleness of the other, had woven a confused tangle of lies and intrigues through which it seemed impossible for any man to break his way with prudence and honour. Knox, with his love of clear issues, must have been profoundly disappointed with the verdict. “Nothing,” it was declared, “had been deduced against the Earl of Moray and his adherents that may impair their honour or allegiance; and, on the other part, there hath nothing been sufficiently produced against the Queen their sovereign whereby the Queen of England should take any evil opinion against the Queen, her good sister.” To Knox henceforth all the evils that fell on the distracted realm of Scotland,—the plague that visited Edinburgh in 1569, the famine that ensued, the horrors of the three years of civil war that followed—were God’s judgments on the “reservation of that wicked woman, whose iniquity known and lawfully convicted deserved more than ten deaths.”

Moray returned to Scotland in January 1569. The Conferences had at least this result, that Mary was kept a prisoner in England while her brother was recognized as Regent by the English Government. For the next year, his last on earth, he was to lead what his great ancestor James I. had called a “dog’s life” in the sleepless effort to repress disorder. In the North the Earl of Huntley, in the West the Hamiltons, on the

Border, restless freebooters, kept him constantly under arms, while Elizabeth harassed him and weakened his position by ill-timed proposals for Mary's restoration. His chief associates and supporters were among the zealous Protestants. The Ministers lent him the weight of their spiritual authority; from the Assembly of March 1569 a threat of excommunication was issued against the Hamiltons couched in terms as forcible and imperious as were ever used by Hildebrand or Thomas à Becket.

In the autumn of 1569 the rumour reached Knox—as all rumours did reach him—that it was proposed in some quarters to patch up matters by marrying Mary to the Duke of Norfolk. He broke out indignantly, "I see England become more foolish than foolish Scotland. For foolish Scotland would not obey the mouth of God when He had delivered that vile adulteress and cruel murderer of her own husband into their hands to have suffered as her iniquity deserved."

In October the sudden, abortive Catholic rising in the North of England shook Elizabeth's confidence and constrained her to make common cause with Moray's Government. In Scotland, it led to the final breach between Moray and Lethington. It was not altogether without reason that the Secretary "was suspected to be the contriver of all the plots and conspiracies in England and Scotland." From the day of Carberry Hill onwards, he had consistently and secretly been working in Mary's interests. He was in correspondence with the Queen; he was in the counsels of Norfolk; he secretly dictated the policy of Mary's friends in Scotland. It was becoming imperative, by some means or other, to get rid of "the necessary evil," as Moray

bitterly nicknamed his former friend. Complicity in the King's murder was a convenient accusation to keep in readiness; with justice it might have been brought at any time against the chief men of both parties. At the Convention at Stirling on September 3, it was suddenly launched against the Secretary. "As long as I was with them, they never accused me of the King's murder; . . . as long as I was a pillar to maintain their unjust authority they never put at me as they do," is his own bitter but matter-of-fact explanation.

He was sent to Edinburgh and received as prisoner of State by the Captain of the Castle, Kirkcaldy of Grange, not without opposition on the part of the Regent and his friends who had misgivings as to the Captain's loyalty. Few men in Scotland could show as fair a record as the Laird of Grange. He had been the bravest and not the least self-sacrificing of the Protestant leaders during the Civil War; he had followed Moray into exile when the fortunes of the Congregation were at the lowest. But he had a chivalrous habit of being on the weaker side. On the day when she lost everything else, Mary won to her service the stoutest arm and the most honest heart in Scotland. Lethington, with his personal attraction, the active scheming of his politic brain and the cunning straightforwardness of speech which he affected, fascinated the simpler character of the soldier. So persuasive was the tongue of this "Machiavelli," that had it been possible it would have deceived the very elect. On September 20, Lethington wrote hopefully to Mary, "I have of late dealt with diverse Ministers here, who will not be repugnant to a good accord; howsoever, I think Nox (*sic*) be inflexible." It was impossible for a man of the



world and a politician like the Secretary to realize the passion of religious hatred with which the Reformer regarded "Satan's dearest lieutenant," the Queen of Scots. Knox's political sagacity demanded her removal as imperatively as his religious zeal demanded the execution of God's righteous judgments on her iniquity. On January 2, 1570, he wrote urgently to Cecil: "If ye strike not at the root, the branches that appear to be broken will bud again . . . with greater force than we would wish." Years before he had warned Cecil against that "carnal wisdom and worldly policy (to which both, ye are bruited to be much inclined)"; now he urges him to "turn to God and forget yourself and yours." The "broken branches" to which Knox refers were the leaders of the Northern Rising, the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland who, on the failure of their rebellion, had found refuge among the lawless chiefs of the Scottish Border. Moray had perhaps only played the part of a faithful ally to Queen Elizabeth when he pursued her rebels and succeeded in capturing Northumberland, but his action was resented by most of his countrymen as a national disgrace and an outrage on hospitality, the one virtue universally recognized in Scotland.

His breach with Lethington—still more, his action with regard to Northumberland—had added to the number of Moray's enemies, but the most dangerous of these, the Hamiltons, cherished a deadlier and a more personal hostility. As next heirs to the throne they claimed the Regency and bitterly resented Moray's ascendancy.

Early in January 1570 Moray had gone to the West Country despite the anxious warnings of his friends.

During his absence Knox had an interview with the Abbot of Kilwinning, one of the chief men among the Hamiltons, who begged his interest with the Regent to obtain pardon for certain of his relations. It was the kind of request that Knox rarely refused; but he had a profound distrust of the Hamiltons, and added this warning: "Abuse not my labours, my Lord, although I be a poor man, yet I am a servant of God, and would be loth to be spotted without any dishonesty . . . But this I will protest before God . . . that if there be anything attempted in that surname against the person of that man, I discharge myself of you and them for ever." After this interview Knox's anxiety seems to have taken the shape of definite presentiment. Two several times he sent his confidential servant to the Countess of Moray to urge her to warn her husband against passing through Linlithgow.

When at last the blow fell, and a shot from an upper window in Linlithgow struck down the "Good Regent," it added a bitter pang to Knox to learn that it had been fired by Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh, the man whose life he had saved. The Abbot of Kilwinning, anxious to disavow all knowledge of the deed, was urgent to see Knox, but he closed his door on him with the bitter sarcasm: "I have not the Regent to make suit unto for the Hamiltons."

There is a weight of personal sorrow in the prayer in which Knox publicly lamented Moray's death: "O Lord, in what misery and confusion found he this realm! And to what rest and quietness now by his labours suddenly he hath brought the same, all Estates, but especially the poor Commons, can witness. Thy image, Lord, did so clearly shine in him, that the

Devil, and the wicked, to whom he is prince, could not abide it . . . He is at rest, O Lord, and we are left in extreme misery."

From this mood of despondency he was stirred to active indignation by slanders against himself, the late Regent, and others, his associates. A singular paper was going from hand to hand purporting to be a letter from some one in the Regent's household. The writer describes himself as roused one morning from sleep in his little inner room by the assembling of guests in the Regent's private chamber. Through a crack in the wall he recognized Moray's familiar acquaintances, Lord Lindsay, the Laird of Pitarrow, Macgill, Clerk Register, John Knox, and some other notable Protestants. Listening, he overhears startling matters. Moray begins the conversation, suggesting the advice he desires his friends to urge on him, namely, that he should possess himself of the Crown. Lord Lindley speaks next—a blunt, plain man, affecting swash-buckler phrases, and bragging that if it comes to blows he will play his part. Knox follows with a "stuir (husky) and krocken (croaking) voice" and "eyes uplifted to Heaven." So admirably have the rhythm and diction of his style been caught, that any one reading the first phrases inattentively would certainly think them genuine. Even when he ends by declaring that he has written a companion pamphlet to the *Blast against the Regiment of Women*, proving "that birth has no power to promote, nor yet bastardy to exclude men from government," it is only the matter and not the manner that is incredible. In perfect character, Moray disclaims all ambition, but adds: "But I will not oppose myself to the will of God revealed in you, who

are His true minister." If we were familiar with the rest of the company we should probably recognize as equally happy the neat, classical apologue of the Tutor of Pitcure, the pragmatistical pedantry of Mr. John Wood, and the broken hints and allusions of that "wily child," the Clerk Register.

If this production was meant merely as a political satire, its exceeding fineness defeated its end. That generation of Scotsmen had laughed over Sir David Lindsay's picturesque and pungent *Satires*; it could enjoy Knox's occasional harsh outbursts of laughter over the follies and disasters of his opponents; nor was the dull and elaborate sarcasm of Buchanan's *Chameleon* beyond its comprehension; but it had no understanding of satirical portraiture which kept so close to probability that it never passed into caricature. The letter was received with a burst of indignation, "as the most malicious lies that ever man invented." Some even of Knox's admirers had an anxious misgiving that it might be true. Women are proverbially deficient in a sense of irony; it was one of "the devouter sex," Alice Sandilands, Lady of Ormiston, who, in great perturbation, brought the pamphlet to Knox. Her mind was only put at rest when the preacher on the following Sunday, from his pulpit in St. Giles', denounced "the Devil, the father of lies, as the chief inventor of the letter," and prophesied a lonely death in a strange land to the penman of it. The fine wits, which were the inheritance of all the "brothers of the House of Lethington," had already made some of the young Maitlands suspected. Going out of church that Sunday Mr. Thomas, younger brother to the Secretary, admitted that he was the writer of the pamphlet.

On February 14, Moray was buried in the south aisle of St. Giles'. Knox preached from the text, "*Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur*," moving many to tears. His own heart was heavy and full of foreboding. The next day he wrote in his journal: "And so I end, rendering my troubled spirit in the hands of the eternal God . . . All debts known to me are paid, death only excepted, which I defy, for the sting of it is destroyed by Jesus Christ, Who is my life now and ever."

## CHAPTER XXII.

### KNOX AND KIRKCALDY OF GRANGE.

THE death of Moray left Knox sadly isolated. Of the old band with whom he had wrought and fought in the Civil War of 1559-60, the Duke, Lethington, Grange and Argyle were all on the Queen's side. So destitute was the King's party of capable leaders, that it was constrained to choose, as the new Regent, the King's grandfather, the Catholic Earl of Lennox, whose return to Scotland five years before had raised an outcry among the faithful. His incapacity was a jest among the Queen's faction. "Whether the Earl of Lennox's back be able to carry the heavy burden which her weak shoulders could not bear, let the world judge, especially such as are acquainted with his naturalty, and have good proof how gravely he can discourse on matters of State." The sneer is probably Lethington's. The real head of the King's party was the Earl of Morton whose greed and private vices were a by-word. He had stood selfishly aloof in the early struggle and had taken no part in the Reformation except to share the crimes and to divide the spoil. These were strange allies for Knox whose single-mindedness and sincerity his worst enemies could not deny. He was at this time sixty-five years

of age, and constant labours and anxieties had made him an old man ; attacks of pain and despondency became more frequent. The brief, imperative note to Cecil, already referred to (January 2, 1570), is subscribed : " John Knox with his one foot in the grave." In the autumn of this year (1570) he had a stroke of paralysis. His speech was ever afterwards affected, and his voice, never very strong, could no longer fill St. Giles'. He still preached every Sunday but he had to creep slowly up the street leaning on his " club."

There was a young man at this time in his household, half secretary, half servant, named Richard Bannatyne, who describes himself as gladly doing Knox menial service, " not so much for worldly commodity, as for the integrity and uprightness he knew to be in him." The pen had fallen from his master's hand, we have no more of his short, passionate comments on current events ; but this secretary, a stupid, observant man, had an indiscriminating industry in collecting and transcribing alike political news and minute gossip. Posterity would have been more grateful to him if he had had the foresight to record his master's table-talk.

As Knox grew weaker in body, the cares and contradictions and conflicts of life lay more heavily on his spirit. Though he might write with all sincerity : " I have taken my good-night of the world, and all the ' fascherie ' (vexations) of the same except to lament for my own sins, and for the sins of others," it was impossible for him to leave the world to go on its own ungodly way. To himself it seemed as if his inward vision were growing preternaturally clear. His denunciations of his enemies took most frequently the form of foretelling particular evils against them ; prophecies which more

than once, in that fanatical and superstitious age, brought about their own fulfilment. In ordinary occurrences he saw signs and wonders. One evening the noisy garrison up in the Castle were having a mock combat, and three shots were fired. Knox was sitting with two friends in his house in the Netherbow. To his visionary sense those three stray shots brought some mysterious message, but the weary mind and the heavily-weighted tongue refused to convey it. "I could expound if I might speak, the mystery of yon three cannons; but because the night is far spent, and I may not well speak, I conclude with this sentence of Solomon, 'Ante ruinam præit fastus.'" His most mystical utterances were, after all, generally based on solid practical judgment and experience. "I saw as great bravado in the Castle of St. Andrews," he added, "and yet few days brought a miserable desolation." A story has become traditional that one evening, by an inexplicable impulse, he left his usual seat at supper which was opposite the window, and took his place at one side of the table. As he and his household sat at meat, a shot shattered the window and struck the vacant chair at the head of the table. Unauthenticated as is this legend, it serves to show the superstitious sanctity that was attached by his followers to his person. "Meddle with him who will, to his hurt," wrote one of his friends to an officer of the garrison, "God shall revenge it ere it be long."

During the winter of 1570-71 the country was drifting into civil war, a war of factions, treacheries, and greed. If there were any virtue, patriotism or good faith among the combatants, it was not more discernible on the one side than on the other. Knox's colleague, the fearless and judicious Craig, denounced both sides



equally. Knox was a stronger partisan ; hatred of the Queen and her crimes kept him unfaltering on the side of the King's party.

In Edinburgh the feeling between the town and the Castle grew daily more strained. In December 1570 a servant of the Laird of Grange had been clapped into the city gaol for an act of violence done at Leith in his master's quarrel. In defiance of all good order, the Captain sent armed men, under cover of a dark night, who broke open the prison, brought off their own man, and set the other inmates free. Fearful or treacherous, the authorities made no remonstrance, but, next Sunday in St. Giles' the old preacher spoke out with broken utterance but unabated fire. The affection he had formerly felt for Grange gave pathetic weight to his reproaches. "If the committer had been a man without God, a throat-cutter, and such as had never known the works of God, it had moved me no more than other riots and enormities . . . but to see stars fall from Heaven, and a man of knowledge to commit such manifest treason, what godly heart cannot lament, tremble, and fear?"

Grange had given up the habit of going to church—he had found it irksome and mortifying to have personal rebukes hurled at him from the pulpit—but eager informers, stupidly inaccurate or treacherously bent on mischief, hastened to tell him that he had been called "murderer," "cut-throat," and "man without God." The high spirit and hot temper of the soldier was naturally stung. He wrote to the Session of Edinburgh, angrily accusing Knox of exceeding the bounds of his office ; "which, probably, he has done of private grudge, to alienate the hearts of all honest men from me, and

to make me odious and contemptible, rather than for correction's sake." When however on the following Sunday Knox repeated his former words with emphasis, the Captain declared himself satisfied, and here the quarrel between the two old friends might have ended. But Knox would not let the matter rest there. In his defence of himself presented to the Session, he repeats his accusation in an altered and sophistical shape: "To the said William's complaint I answer nothing, save only this: that his own confession convicts him to be a murderer in heart . . . for our Master Jesus Christ and His apostle John pronounced the hatred of the heart to be murder before God; yea, John affirms 'that whoso loveth not his brother is a manslayer.'"

But neither the brawl at Leith with its fatal termination nor the lawless assault on the Tolbooth was the worst of Grange's offences in Knox's eye. "What it is to accuse a *minister* for the function of his office, I suppose you understand?" he asked the Session sternly, standing before them leaning on his staff. The sacerdotal authority of the Romish priesthood was being rapidly replaced in the Protestant Church of Scotland by a mysterious sanctity attached to certain preachers by right of prophetic gifts which they believed themselves to hold directly from God. In this sacred character Knox claimed not only immunity from criticism but also recognition as one peculiarly identified with God's cause. As early as 1558, in his Appellation to the Nobility of Scotland from the unjust accusation of the prelates, he had been bold to tell them that if they refused his petition "God (Whom in me ye contemn) will also refuse you."

The General Assembly met at Edinburgh in the

beginning of March. The presence of a hostile garrison seems to have subdued the spirit of the Ministers. Knox was left to bear the brunt of the battle alone. The Assembly met in a room immediately below that in which the Lords of Session held their meetings. One day a paper was dropped from the upper into the lower room. It was unsigned and accused Knox of railing at Mary and of refusing to pray for her. "Good, godly Mr. Richard Bannatyne," moved by affection and officious zeal, urged the Assembly to sign a bond unanimously supporting his master. There was no alacrity to sign; on the contrary, some of the brethren were earnest with Knox that he should pass over the accusations in silence. He answered shortly, "The Church may forbid me preaching, but to stop my tongue being in the pulpit it may not." As to the accusation of railing, he declared himself ready to acknowledge himself a railer if the Queen were indeed innocent of the crime laid to her charge; but, he asks, How many of her friends, in their consciences, believe in her innocence? Among those who espoused Mary's cause, it is difficult to make out if any believed her to be guiltless. They certainly made no remonstrance to the damnatory prayer of one of her own supporters, the Bishop of Galloway: "If we should not pray for sinners, for whom should we pray? . . . St. David was a sinner, and so is she; St. David was an adulterer, and so is she; St. David committed murder in slaying Urias for his wife, and so did she."

But if Knox flung off the main accusation in this manner, two taunts in the libel cut him to the quick. Not without sufficient grounds the writer had described him as "entering into God's secret counsel as though he were privy thereof and called thereto." In this

very sermon, Knox had hinted at a mysterious power bestowed on himself, whereby he could influence the judgments of God. Admitting that he had always desired the confusion of Mary and her flatterers, he added, "I praise my God, He of His mercy has not disappointed my first just prayer; let them call it imprecation or execration as pleases them. *It has oftener than once stricken, and shall strike, in despite of man.*" Yet he was sincerely aghast at the accusation of spiritual arrogance: "If my accusers understood how fearful my conscience is, and ever has been, to exceed the bonds of my vocation, they would not so boldly have accused me."

The libel had ended with a threat of further accusations against Knox to follow at the next Assembly, "provided he be then law-abiding, and not fugitive according to his accustomed manner." If this sneer recalled the old, uneasy scruples as to his own conduct, there is a noble dignity in the old man's reply to it; whether he be law-abiding or not, was, he declared, in the hands of Him who, through many troubles had preserved him to this "decrepit age which now is not like to fly far."

The "Castilians" (as the garrison was called) had discovered the way to torment Knox. Two Sundays later another anonymous letter was nailed to the door of the Tolbooth. It was drawn up with skill, the work evidently of "some lawless man-of-law's brain." The notes of that unlucky *First Blast* were to ring in Knox's ears once again. A dilemma was put in the libel neatly enough; either the doctrine of that book was seditious, or, if it were true, how came Knox to pray for the Queen of England, and even to invoke her

aid "against his own native country, and the liberty thereof" ?

Knox was never arrested by a logical difficulty. He got out of the dilemma, though in a way that would hardly have conciliated Elizabeth. "The prayer of God's servants for the maintenance of Commonwealths, where the people of God remains, does not prove that they allow all things done in such Commonwealths; neither yet does the seeking of help (even from the wicked) prove that the godly justifies the wicked."

To the wanton and lying accusation that he had failed in patriotism, there was no answer possible but indignant, brief denial: "One thing I may not pretermit, to give him the lie in his throat that either dare or will say that ever I sought support against my own country."

He had told angry men the truth to their faces; he could boast truly that he had "made himself and all his doings manifest to the world." Now he was himself struck at in the dark by an unknown hand. "To me it seems," he declares, "a thing most unreasonable, that, in this my decrepit age, I shall be compelled to fight against shadows and owlets, that dare not abide the light."

In the spring of 1571 the smouldering fire of civil war burst into a blaze. In April the leaders of the Queen's faction assembled in Edinburgh. From the stronghold of the Castle they meant to defy the Regent and the Earl of Morton. The first to arrive was "the head of wit, the Secretary." He, like Knox, was stricken by disease; though he was so helpless that he had to be carried from Leith to the Castle in a litter, yet from his sick bed he directed all the counsels of his party. The

town filled rapidly with the Hamiltons and their allies, among whom many were bitterly hostile to Knox. It became a question whether his life were safe amongst them. On April 19, some of the brethren watched all night round his house. When they appealed to the Captain for protection, Grange offered a guard to convey their minister to and from church, commanded by one of his officers whom he recommended as "an old Protestant." "An old Protestant like the Secretary," is Knox's comment. But with the town full of reckless men-at-arms and hostile Hamiltons, Grange would take no further responsibility unless Knox would come up to the Castle, where he should be assured of honourable treatment. Knox's friends urged him to quit the city but at first he declined to forsake his charge.

By the end of April Lennox and Morton were encamped at Leith and skirmishes took place daily. The roof of St. Giles' was fortified, and cannons were planted on the steeple. (The soldiers in jest called the largest of them "Knox," and when it burst and killed several of them, the godly recognized the Divine judgment on their ribaldry.) Seeing that it was impossible to carry on services under these conditions, "John Knox departed the town on May 5, 1571, sore against his will, being compelled of the brethren of the Church and town; because that his tarry would be an occasion of further trouble to them."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

ST. ANDREWS. (1571—1572.)

THE little, grey cathedral town of St. Andrews set beside a wintry sea has a charm, denied to many happier places, potent to call back to her those who have at any time tarried long beneath the shadow of her towers. But it was probably reasons of safety rather than of sentiment that sent Knox back to the scene of his early ministry, when he was driven out of Edinburgh in the summer of 1571. Civil war was raging over the length and breadth of the kingdom. Kyle, his former refuge, lay too near the country of the Hamiltons to offer him shelter, while the East Neuk of Fife was at least remote from scenes of bloodshed. But St. Andrews was not exactly the place where a world-weary man could find peace. An active, highly organized society, ecclesiastical and academic, crowded together in narrow streets and College buildings, could hardly lack subjects of jealousy and conflict; to these local bickerings there was added, in the summer of 1571, a contention which, while it agitated the whole Church of Scotland, happened to have its centre in St. Andrews.

Morton had been sent in the spring of 1571 on an embassy to Elizabeth, and had, at least, succeeded in preventing that wavering politician from sending help

to the Queen's party in Scotland. As a reward for his services, he, on his return, bestowed on himself the Archbishopric of St. Andrews, left vacant by the execution of Archbishop Hamilton. To cloak this act of rapacity, he appointed as nominal Archbishop, John Douglas, the old and simple-minded Rector of the University of St. Andrews, who, for his share, was to have the dignity and the duties of the See, while Morton seized the emoluments and the patronage. It was the heaviest blow that had been aimed at the Reformed Church of Scotland since she was a Church at all, and it came from the head of the party on whose success in arms her very existence depended !

By this system, initiated by Morton, greedy nobles could continue to enrich themselves and their kindred out of the Church's patrimony as unscrupulously as in the worst times of Catholicism, while they would carefully choose to fill the higher posts in the Church such Ministers as would not dare to rebuke the avarice nor curb the violence of their patrons. Frail and confined to bed and only able to write to dictation, Knox had left the duty of defending the Church from this new tyranny to Erskine of Dun, whose letter to the Regent is as fearless and noble a protest as ever came from the hands of Knox himself. But when in the last days of August 1571 the General Assembly met at Stirling, Knox sent a clear and authoritative message to his sorely-perplexed and despondent brethren. "Remember the judge before whom ye stand, and resist that tyranny as ye would Hell-fire." Morton was all-powerful in the Parliament that sat at Stirling in the last days of August; when the Assembly presented their protest against this new invasion of the Church's liberty, Len-



nox, the Catholic Regent, thought it most "reasonable," but Morton, in his hectoring fashion, called the Ministers "proud knaves," and vowed that "he would lay their pride and put order thereto."

A week later the Parliament was rudely interrupted; a body of the Queen's troops was sent from Edinburgh to surprise the town and seize the person of the Regent and his associates. Had Grange commanded as well as devised the attack, it would probably have been as successful as it was daring. As it was, it only failed by a hair's-breadth. In the fray Lennox lost his life. The Earl of Mar was within four-and-twenty hours chosen Regent in his place. If he had no conspicuous ability, he had shown, both as Captain of Edinburgh Castle and later as guardian of the King, an incorruptible fidelity, which was a finer and rarer distinction in those days. But he was powerless, even if he were willing, to oppose Morton's design on the Church.

In the following January (1572) an Assembly of Ministers met the Lords of the Council at Leith. In the previous autumn the Ministers had expostulated boldly with the Regent against the new tyranny of Morton and his fellows. But, at the Convention of Leith, this boldness had given place to a spirit of compromise. The dangerous state of the country had prevented many of the Ministers attending; those who were present were over-awed by Morton and others of the Lords "who were hunting for fat Church livings." In undignified haste the desired concessions were made. "At that meeting, Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans, Chapters, and Chancellors were agreed upon to stand during the King's minority; but Bishops to have no further jurisdiction than Superintendents."

This system of Morton's invention, by which the highest dignitaries of the Church became mere "Tulchans"<sup>1</sup> in the hands of greedy nobles, was the cause of that detestation of bishops which in the next century was raised in Scotland into a religious principle of such importance, that men were not only willing to die for it but even to put others to death. This feeling sprang up in the first instance from no abstract objection to an ecclesiastical system. The Superintendents appointed by the *Book of Discipline* were practically bishops shorn of wealth and ceremonial and political power. Erskine of Dun uses the two terms interchangeably; and Knox, though he thanked God that "he was but a painful preacher of His blessed Evangel and not a lord-like bishop," inveighs, not against the office but against the pomp attached to it.

Even in the servile Assembly at Leith there was one fearless voice raised on behalf of the Ministers whose poverty was as afflicting under a Protestant Regent as formerly under a Catholic Queen. Robert Ferguson, a man of wit and character, preaching before the Regent told him boldly that "the reason why ye have not prevailed against yon throat-cutters and unnatural murderers within the Castle of Edinburgh . . . is this, that the spoil of the poor is within your household . . . Seeing there is enough (and overmuch) to do it, let the preachers of God's Word be reasonably sustained, the schools and poor well provided, and the temples honestly and reverently repaired, that the people without injury of wind or weather may sit and hear God's Word." It was not often that Knox rejoiced in spirit, but this

<sup>1</sup> Stuffed calf-skins placed under cows to induce them to give their milk.

faithful echo of his own trumpet stirred his heart. The copy of Ferguson's sermon presented to the Regent is subscribed (along with the names of other Ministers) by "John Knox, with my dead hand but glad heart, praising God, that of His mercy He leaves such light to His Church in this desolation."

Knox was to find at St. Andrews that there was no lack of torch-bearers to hand on the light that he had kindled. During the autumn and winter of 1571-72 he grew weaker from month to month, though without much "corporal pain." It was a severe season, and he came little "out of bed and from his book." His "dull heart" constantly meditating on the state of Scotland and of the Church, found cause enough for fear and despondency. He was driven to the admission that the Protestant nobles "take no more care of the instruction of the ignorant and of the feeding of the flock of Jesus Christ than ever did the Papists *whom we have condemned, and yet are worse ourselves in that behalf.*" But the Reformer or thinker may be well content who finds his own thought again in the convictions of the men under thirty. The Abbey where Knox had his lodgings lay near St. Leonard's College, and the "regents" or fellows resorted daily to him after dinner or supper to hear him talk. On mild days he would himself creep along the street, wrapt in his furred mantle, leaning on his staff and on the arm of Richard Bannatyne. He would often turn into the court of St. Leonard's College to rest, and the students, reverent and interested, would crowd around him. On the ingenuous and finely sympathetic nature of one of these, James Melville, these visits made an impression so vivid that years afterwards he could recall them in detail. "He would call us scholars unto

him, bless us and exhort us to know God and His will in our country and stand by the good cause, to use our time well and learn the good instructions and follow the good example of our masters." Melville and his fellow-students used to bring pens and ink-horns and little books with them to church to take down the sermon. Knox was so frail that he had to be lifted into the pulpit, and "behoved to lean at his first entry; but ere he had done with his sermon he was so active and vigorous that he was like to ding the pulpit in blads (knock the pulpit to pieces) and fly out of it." He preached all that winter from the Book of Daniel, applying the prophecies so plainly and particularly to current events in Scotland that pens and ink-horns were laid aside, and men feared and trembled as they listened. Once, as if he were seeing a vision, he described the vengeance that should overtake his enemies "when Edinburgh Castle should run like sand in a glass, and the Captain should come, with shame, over the wall on a ladder." The parish-minister, a certain Robert Hamilton, sat in the congregation, irritated and sceptical; from the pulpit Knox addressed him: "Thou, that will not believe my warrant, shalt see it with thine eyes that day." "Many," adds Melville, "were offended at this particularity, and called it rash railing." Not one whit was Knox's "particularity" mitigated when he preached before the all-powerful Morton, who, in January 1572, came over in person to overawe the Church at St. Andrews and see his nominee, John Douglas, installed as Archbishop. Hitherto Knox had spoken but sparingly against the appointment, "because he loved the man," and, feeling the weight of his own years, had chiefly pity for another old man eagerly accepting a charge, "which

twenty of the best gifts could not bear." But face to face with Morton he vehemently denounced "anathema to the giver, anathema to the receiver." His age and the superstitious reverence in which he was held enabled him to speak out with impunity—but without effect. The Lords had threatened to desert the Church if they got not the Church livings, so the Ministers of Fife saw themselves constrained to yield to Morton and solemnly installed the new Bishop.

It came to Knox's ears that his enemies went about insinuating that his opposition sprung from chagrin that the bishopric had not been offered to himself. It was not in his choleric, sensitive nature to ignore unworthy slanders; he vindicated himself proudly from the pulpit in the presence of all the dignitaries of Church and University. "I have refused a greater bishopric than ever it was which I might have had with the favour of greater men than he hath his."

Knox had many enemies overt or hidden in the little town who not daring, for the reverence in which he was held, to attack him directly, spread false reports about him. The story that he had conspired with Moray to make away with Darnley before his marriage with Mary, could be met with the stern demand that proof should be produced; it was far more difficult to meet vague and ugly rumours with regard to his domestic life. Malignant and irresponsible tongues had got hold of his close and peculiar friendship for his mother-in-law, Mrs. Bowes, and had twisted them to their own vile purposes. The poor, innocent cause of the scandal was dead and Knox felt it due to himself to declare to the world that the grounds of their friendship had been neither "flesh nor blood, but her troubled conscience which could find

rest in the society of the faithful, of whom she judged me to be one." A finer reticence, a more chivalrous tenderness for the dead would have omitted the further explanation. "Her company to me was comfortable (yea, honourable and profitable, for she was to me and mine a mother), but yet, it was not without some cross ; for, besides trouble and faschery of body sustained for her, my mind was seldom quiet for doing somewhat for the comfort of her troubled conscience." These wearisome scandals were raked up after Knox's death, and repeated again and again with odious and monstrous additions by one Catholic writer after the other. Incredible and absurd as such stories are, there is an ironical justice in the fact that he, who was himself so greedy and credulous of scandals, should have become, in his turn, the prey of scandal-mongers.

One chief authority for these slanders was a certain Archibald Hamilton, whose enmity to Knox dated from this winter (1572) in St. Andrews. Society in Scotland was still so feudal that a man's surname generally dictated his religious and political convictions. There were among the members of the Colleges of St. Salvator and St. Mary several Hamiltons who chafed angrily at Knox's constant denunciations of their kinsfolk for murder. Archibald Hamilton, having on this account absented himself from the sermon, was summoned by the Bishop and Superintendent of Fife before a Synod held in Knox's bed-chamber. He held his ground, and in his turn accused Knox of preaching in the pulpit doctrines he could not defend in the schools,—an academic aspect of the matter not likely to commend itself to the prophetic spirit of Knox ! His resentment of this criticism is curiously reflected in a letter to the

General Assembly which met at Perth in August 1572: "Above all things preserve the Church from the bondage of the Universities . . . subject never the pulpit to their judgment; neither ye exempt them from your jurisdiction."

Two episodes in this visit to St. Andrews are singularly obnoxious to modern feeling.

The rationalizing spirit of Protestantism had discarded the mystical adoration of the Real Presence in the Mass; to the superstitious belief in witchcraft it was, at least, as much in bondage as the teaching of the older Church. In the spring of 1572 a miserable old woman was burnt at St. Andrews. The Sunday before she had been dragged to church, and callous with wretchedness and hallucination, was held up opposite the pulpit whence Knox hurled denunciations at her. In this scene of ignominy and ignorance the preacher plays a more pitiable part than his victim. The age was in truth incredibly harsh and unimaginative. When the youths of St. Leonard's entertained Knox with a dramatic performance, they represented the fall of the Castle of Edinburgh, and burnt Knox's old friend Grange in effigy.

In May 1572, feeling that the end could not be far off, Knox made his will. First, to the community at large he left a testimony of his mind; to the Papists this special message that unless they repented, the death of him (their faithful admonisher) would be the greatest calamity that had befallen them; to the faithful this vindication of his work amongst them: "None I have corrupted; none I have defrauded; merchandise have I not made . . . of the glorious Evangel of Jesus Christ." The testamentary part of

the will shows that Knox had that practical mastery of his private economies, without which no man can have perfect freedom for the things of the spirit. The "debts owing to the dead" amounted to £830 Scots (= £166). The "debts owing by the dead = none." To his sons, Ebenezer and Nathaniel (at that time students at Cambridge), he left, as a precious remembrance, "that same benediction that their dearest mother, Marjorie Bowes, left unto them . . . that God would make them His true worshippers; whereto, now as then, I from my troubled heart say, Amen." Their mother's fortune of a hundred marks sterling (= £66 13s. 4d.), augmented by his care to £500 Scots (= £100),<sup>1</sup> was left to these two sons, also certain articles of plate, among them a silver goblet with J. K. M. on one side, and on the other E. B. N.

The rest of his property was left to his wife, Margaret Stuart and his three children, Martha, Margaret, and Elizabeth Knox; including the debts owing to him it amounted to £1526 Scots (= £305), besides furniture valued at £30 Scots (= £6), and books valued at £130 Scots (= £26). The people of Edinburgh had dealt liberally with their minister.<sup>2</sup> His stipend, which had been two hundred marks Scots (= £10 16s. 8d.) to begin with, had been augmented latterly to five hundred

<sup>1</sup> Following the calculations of Mr. Laing (Knox's *Collected Works*, Vol. VI., p. lxii), £5 Scots were, at this time, equal to £1 sterling. The mark Scots, in which Knox's salary was paid, was two-thirds of £1 Scots. Mrs. Knox's dowry was paid in marks sterling, equal to 13s. 4d.

<sup>2</sup> According to the standard of his age and country, Knox's stipend was liberal. The Principal of St. Leonard's College, St. Andrews, at the same date had a salary of £10 Scots.



marks Scots (=£27 1s. 8d.). Relying on their tried generosity, he simply nominates "the faithful to be oversmen" (trustees). They fulfilled the trust. The Town Council of Edinburgh granted the enjoyment of his stipend to his wife and children for two years after his death.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE END.

MEANWHILE all Scotland, and especially the capital, was plunged in the horrors of a factious and merciless civil war. There was a growing exasperation in the country against Maitland and Grange as the cause of all the misery. These men had their backs to the wall, and were obstinately holding out in what they must have known to be a hopeless cause. Up to the beginning of 1572, the Secretary, confident in his knowledge of Elizabeth's character, had expected that she would eventually restore Mary to her kingdom. The discovery, in the autumn of 1571, of the Norfolk conspiracy and Mary's complicity in it, made such a policy on Elizabeth's part for ever impossible: in Scotland the Queen's party had been weakened by the defection of the Protestant Lords, Argyle, Cassilis, and Boyd. The one hope of the Queen's friends lay in foreign intervention; they wasted time and kept their party alive in the expectation that any day might see French troops landed at Leith, or Alva heading a Spanish invasion. French money and French arms were secretly conveyed into the Castle; at the same time an active correspondence was carried on with the Spanish Government at

Brussels by means of Mary's faithful friend, Lord Seton. Knox had grounds for denouncing the "treasonable doings of the Castle of Edinburgh," when Lethington, the enlightened patriot and firm friend of England, was inviting a Spanish invasion, and Grange, the champion of Protestantism, was the ally of Alva!

But if these men were desperate, if Lethington especially was, as Randolph describes him, "unmindful of God and unnatural to his country" (March 7, 1572), it was because the opposite side had made reconciliation impossible. Knox and the other preachers with their prophecies and solemn denunciations had so inflamed the superstitious imagination of the people that nothing short of the destruction of Grange and Lethington would appease their rage. Moreover, Morton was the real head of the King's party, and Morton was as cruel as he was greedy. To a man of his churlish nature it was no claim that in the old days Lethington had done him such substantial kindness that he (Morton) had declared in jest that the record of it should be laid up in his charter chest. On the contrary, the memory of obligations probably made him more willing to destroy his former friend. All through the winter and spring of 1572<sup>1</sup> the weary siege went on, while famine made a desert of Edinburgh and of all the country for miles round. It was, as Lord Hunsdon, the English envoy, described it, "a pleasant and profitable time for murderers, thieves, and such as live only by the spoils of true men." The substantial citizens of Edinburgh, men of Knox's congregation, had been forced to leave their houses in the city and had taken refuge with the Regent and his troops at Leith. In the skirmishes with the Castle garrison, they fought more constantly

than the hired soldiers. In the end of July, thanks to the good offices of the English and French ambassadors, a two months' armistice was arranged between the garrison and the army at Leith. On the evening of the first day the exiled citizens marched in at the gates in a compact body. At their head walked one minister with his Bible under his arm, another minister brought up the rear in full armour and with his "caliver on his shoulder." It was an accidental but curiously apt type of the Church of Scotland. Many of these burgesses found their dwellings wrecked, the woodwork torn down and carried off for fuel. They had their houses to re-build, their trades to re-establish, but there was a more urgent duty which had first to be discharged. On July 2, they drew up a bond, obliging themselves not only to defend Christ's cause and the common interest, but to submit their lives and conversation to the discipline of the Church. In this mood of stern enthusiasm they were dissatisfied with the ministrations of John Craig. He had remained in Edinburgh during the siege, not unsuspected by the godly of having lent a too willing ear to "Machiavelli's" silver tongue. On August 4, his old congregation wrote to Knox craving "that once again his voice might be heard amongst them." "Loth we are to disease or hurt your person in any way," they wrote, "but far lother to want you." Weak as he was, it was not "inability of the body" that made Knox hesitate to accept this invitation. He knew the hollowness of the present peace, and feared lest the vengeance of "the Castilians" might fall later upon those who had associated themselves with him. Yet for no prudent consideration would he consent "to temper his tongue."

His congregation recognized the danger but thought it not too high a price to pay for his presence amongst them.

On August 17 (1572), Knox left St. Andrews—"to the dolour of the few godly, but to the great joy and pleasure of the rest"—and, travelling by slow stages, reached Edinburgh in the last week of August. On the following Sunday he preached to a vast throng in St. Giles'. His voice, never strong enough to fill the building, could scarcely be heard. He desired to go on preaching if only to a hundred persons, and so long as his strength allowed he held services in the Tolbooth. He had often prayed that he might end his ministry in expounding Christ's Passion, and, indeed, the last sermon he preached was on the Death on the Cross.

His main anxiety was that a faithful minister might be appointed in his place. The choice of the congregation fell on Mr. Lawson, sub-principal of Aberdeen and a learned Hebraist. In a singularly courteous note the old man wrote begging the younger one to come and visit him "that they might confer together of heavenly things." There is an urgent postscript to the letter—"Haste, lest ye come too late."

Before he laid down his work Knox had a last prophetic message to deliver. As the Hebrew prophets pronounced oracles against Tyre, Babylon and Egypt, in like fashion did Knox watch God's judgments in the history of Europe. In the early days of September 1572, news of the massacre of St. Bartholomew reached Scotland. Knox was appalled by the sufferings and danger of his brethren in Christ, but he felt also that the Church of Rome had justified the harshest things he had ever said of her. From the pulpit he bade the

French ambassador tell his master "that the sentence is pronounced in Scotland against that murderer the King of France, that God's vengeance shall never depart from him nor his house . . . and that none that shall come of his loins shall enjoy that kingdom in peace and quietness, unless repentance prevent God's judgment." The ambassador angrily desired the Regent and Council to silence the pulpits. They answered frankly that they could not stop the Ministers from railing against themselves.

On Sunday, November 9, Knox inducted Mr. Lawson in St. Giles'. He had already preached that morning in the Tolbooth and his voice was weak. A hushed and awestruck crowd *saw* but scarcely *heard* him rehearse the simple service of admitting the new pastor, and for the last time pronounce the final benediction. He crept back exhausted to his house in the Netherbow, never again to cross its threshold.

On Tuesday, the 11th, he was attacked by a harsh cough and feeling the end draw near he began to set his house in order. He paid his servants their wages, and added more than was actually due, saying he would never give them another fee. His mind seems to have wandered slightly. Mistaking the days of the week, he rose on Friday and prepared for his Sunday sermon. All night he had been meditating on the Resurrection of Christ and desired to complete his course of sermons on the Passion. He was constantly rapt in meditation. At intervals his wife and Richard Bannatyne read aloud to him, sometimes Calvin's sermons, but chiefly the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Ephesians. But, even in this last hour, "the world with its faschery" could not be excluded. As he said of himself, "John

Knox remains the same man now going to die that he has been before when he was able of body"—as constant to his animosities as to his faith.

Up in the Castle his old adversary Lethington lay also dying. His feet were paralyzed, his whole person so frail that he could not endure to sneeze "for annoying the whole body." His nerves and courage were shaken. He knew that the old accusation of complicity in the King's murder would be brought up against him, and would exclude him from pardon. Drury and Randolph who saw him in the previous winter (1572) describe him as "so full of fear and doubt for himself, that if that were provided for" they did not doubt but that other matters could be arranged. All his life Lethington had been a wit and had mocked the Ministers and their pretensions, and they had retaliated by accusations of atheism and irreligion. He had often before disregarded their railing, but now, with the sobering shadow of death upon him, he refused to lie under the opprobrium of being as the fool "who saith in his heart, 'there is no God.'" Two days after Knox fell ill of his last illness, the Secretary wrote to the Session of Edinburgh complaining that their minister had accused him of saying that "there is neither Heaven nor Hell," and that "they are things to frighten bairns with." There is a flash of the old irony in Lethington's final demand that if Knox failed to name his authorities, "at least hereafter ye receive not every word proceeding from his mouth as an oracle."

On Monday, November 17, by his own desire the Session assembled in Knox's sick room. He began by justifying his work in the ministry with all his old force and nobility of phrase, then passed to the con-

sideration of Lethington's letter. His refusal to name his authorities was only honourable and prudent in a time when vengeance was quick and animosities bitter; his evasion of the direct issue was almost audacious in its want of candour. "He desired all men to consider their works, especially the ruin of Edinburgh and the troubling of this quiet Commonwealth and the Church of God within the same: which were a sufficient declaration that he (the Secretary) denied there was any God to punish such wickedness, or yet any Heaven or Hell wherein virtue should be rewarded and vice punished."

Knox regarded Grange as a mere tool in the hands of Lethington and he was full of concern for his old friend. One day when a minister, Mr. David Lindsay, went in to see him, Knox greeted him eagerly: "All this day I have desired to have you, that I might yet send you to yon man in the Castle whom you know I have loved so dearly . . . Bid him in the Name of God leave that evil cause and give over the Castle; if not he shall be brought down over the walls of it with shame and hung against the sun. So God has assured me." Mr. Lindsay, though he thought "the threatening over particular," delivered the message to the Captain, who at first seemed somewhat moved by it, but after he had conferred with the Secretary, came out again and bade Mr. Lindsay "tell Mr. Knox that he was but a 'drytting' (drivelling) prophet." When this was reported to Knox, he answered: "Well, I have been earnest with my God anent these two men; for the one, I am sorry that so should befall him, yet God assures me there is mercy for his soul; for that other I have no warrant that ever he shall be well." Several



months later, when English cannons had indeed made the "Castle Rock to run like sand," and when the Captain had been condemned to death, that the prophecy of John Knox might be fulfilled, Mr. Lindsay reported these words to Grange the day before he was to suffer : "The which he would have repeated over again to him ; and thereupon was greatly comforted and became of good and cheerful courage."

Before he took his last "good-night of the world," Knox was once more to touch the public life.

The Earl of Mar had died in the end of October and the Regency was perforce offered to Morton. Somewhere in his hard and worldly nature was a spot susceptible to religious impressions, and despite, or perhaps by virtue of unsparing plain speaking, Knox had won and retained his deference. Just before Morton accepted the Regency, he came to take farewell of the dying preacher. They met in the sick-chamber, no one else being present. With all the old directness Knox asked him first, "If he knew anything of the King's murder?" Being satisfied on this point, he charged Morton solemnly "to use all his benefits aright, and better in times to come than ye have done in times past."

These November days in the house in the Netherbow are like the last scene of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, where a great concourse of pilgrims accompany Mr. Valiant-for-Truth to the river side. Men came and went in Knox's sick-chamber ; devout ladies, tried Protestants like Glencairn and Ruthven, old friends like the Laird of Braid and Campbell of Kinyeancleuch, to whose care he confided his wife and little daughters. As long as his strength allowed, Knox sat at table with his guests

and courteously entertained them. On Saturday (15th) two of his acquaintances were at supper with him; he bade his servant pierce a hogshead of claret and desired one of them to send for some of the wine, for he himself would not live to drink it. Up to the last he recognized his friends and said special words of farewell to each, but he was constantly rapt in the inner vision. Once, repeating "Our Father which art in Heaven," the solemn beauty of the familiar words struck him with sudden awe. He interrupted himself, saying, "Who can pronounce so holy words?"

On Monday, November 24, the end came. "A little after noon he caused his wife to read the 15th chapter of I. Corinthians, of the Resurrection; to whom he said: 'Is not that a comfortable chapter?' . . . Thereafter, about five hours, he says to his wife, 'Go, read where I cast my first anchor,' and so she read the 17th of John's Evangel. . . We, thinking that he was asleep, demanded if he heard? Answered, 'I hear, and understand far better, I praise God.'" In that day men believed that the powers of darkness were strong in the last hour, and it was held that dying saints owed it to the Church to bear triumphant witness to their faith. At ten o'clock the brethren watching round Knox's bed in prayer saw the change come. "Sir," said Richard Bannatyne, "the time that ye have long called to God for, to wit, an end to your battle, is come! And seeing all natural power now fails, remember upon these comfortable promises, which oftentimes ye have shown to us of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and that we may understand that ye hear us, make us some sign." "And so he lifted up his one hand, and incontinent thereafter rendered the spirit, and

slept away without any pain, about eleven hours at even !”

On the Wednesday following he was buried in the shadow of St. Giles'. The Regent Morton, standing beside the grave, “gave him an honourable testimony, that he neither feared nor flattered any flesh.”

Among the prophetic utterances of Knox is one which time itself has been busy fulfilling for good and evil during the last three centuries. “What I have been to my country, albeit this ungrateful age will not know, yet the ages to come will be compelled to bear witness to the truth.” To comment adequately on this prophecy would be to write the history of Scotland, political, social, and religious, from the time of Knox to our own day.

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